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THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

E. HERMANN

Harold J. Sanders

January 1913

EUCKEN AND BERGSON

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EUCKEN AND BERGSON

THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

BY

E. HERMANN

SECOND EDITION

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1912

TO

THE MEMORY

OF

MY MOTHER

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PREFACE

WHILE there is an excellent general introduction to Eucken's philosophy for English students—that of his distinguished pupil, Professor Boyce Gibson, of Melbourne—and while we can supplement our study of Bergson by such scholarly discussions as those of Mr. A. D. Lindsay and Dr. J. M'Kellar Stewart, no attempt has been made as yet to present the thought of Eucken and Bergson in its specific bearing upon the problems of theology. It is with a view to supplying this lack in some small measure that this book has been written, and any apparently one-sided emphasis of certain aspects of their thought, as well as the omission of other aspects interesting and valuable in themselves, must be understood with reference to this controlling purpose.

There can be no doubt that the work of Eucken and Bergson is pregnant with theological implications and suggestions, and that it contains powerfully formative elements for Christian thought. Eucken's philosophy, indeed, has justly been

described as a philosophical restatement of the teaching of Jesus, and his affinities with theology are so deep and explicit that the theological student instinctively appropriates the valuable elements in his thought, and, swimming with the current, as it were, does not realise its force as a provocative and stimulating agent. It is only where Eucken's rejection of dogmatic values excites the opposition of the positive theologian that his impact upon Christian thought is fully realised. It is different with Bergson, whose work has not yet passed from its critical to its constructive stage and whose philosophy of religion is yet to be given us. In his case a more than tentative critique is impossible, while his untheological training and outlook make his thought take a sharply provocative and suggestive form.

My sincere thanks are due, in the first place, to Professor Eucken, who has most generously encouraged me by his kindly appreciation of my past fragmentary efforts in various journals and by his warm interest in the preparation of this book. To the Rev. Principal Forsyth, D.D., of Hackney College, London, and to the Rev. M. L. Johnson, B.A., of Sydney—the Australian Forsyth—I have long been deeply indebted on the theological side : to the first for initial inspiration, to the second for my introduction to

the thought of Bergson in its theological implications. In the section on Eucken I have derived help from Professor Boyce Gibson's book; in that on Bergson from Mr. Lindsay's, Dr. Stewart's, and Mr. Solomon's. Among books which I have consulted with profit I would specially mention William James's "A Pluralistic Universe" and Professor Ward's massive and illuminating book, "The Realm of Ends."

E. Hermann.

London,
March 1912.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

In issuing a second edition of this book, I would take the opportunity of gratefully acknowledging the very cordial and generous reception which has been accorded to it in so many and varied quarters. The demand for a new edition so soon after its first appearance leaves me no time to avail myself of one or two valuable suggestions made by reviewers.

Since the book was first published Professor Eucken has issued the third and greatly revised

edition of " Der Wahrheitsgehalt der Religion," and the fourth and enlarged edition of " Die Hauptprobleme der Religionsphilosophie der Gegenwart," in the latter of which he does fuller justice than hitherto to the new religious psychology. His theory of knowledge, to which students are eagerly looking forward, is expected to appear in the course of next year, under the title " Erkennen und Leben."

E. HERMANN.

LONDON,
June 1912.

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I

The Present Situation: A Diagnosis

CHAPTER I

The Present Situation : A Diagnosis

The outlook of the twentieth century : optimists, pessimists, and onlookers—Contrast with the second half of the nineteenth century : "Robert Elsmere" and Arthur H. Clough as types of "sacrificial" doubters—Religious impressionism and eclecticism of our age—"Light on the Hills"—Bankruptcy of Naturalism and Intellectualism—Natural Science *versus* Naturalism—Superficial disparagement of Intellectualism—The philosophy of the future : Pragmatist, Voluntarist, or what ?—Three elements of modern thought : (1) General dissatisfaction with civilisation and culture, (2) Recognition of the truth-value of religious experience, (3) Conviction of the primacy of the moral in knowledge.

CHAPTER I

The Present Situation: A Diagnosis

WHILE it may be the besetting tendency of every age to see itself storm-tossed and churning with revolutionary and subversive forces beside a preceding age, clear and unruffled in the magic mirror of the enchanted distance, the young twentieth century, at any rate, is not overweighted with pessimism or too deeply bitten with self-depreciation. From many quarters joyous optimists are declaring that the long-looked-for good time has all but actually come. Devastating materialism and arid intellectualism alike have been overthrown and transcended by a new view of life—the philosophy of the spirit. They hear that at last the faith of the twice-born has been accorded a place in the esoteric temple of philosophic enquiry and they take courage. They are informed that science is at last thinking of seeking initiation as a catechumen of the Holy Assembly and they are cheered. They question Sir Oliver Lodge and are assured that it is well with the soul. They look to Eucken and are lightened. They study Bergson and their faces are not ashamed even in the presence of a Ration-

alist *littérateur*. And this spirit of buoyant hopefulness is not confined to such slim and facile souls. Men of weight and sober divination, clairvoyant to the spiritual issues of the time, while seeing the valleys still lapped in turbulent and yeasting darkness, assure us that there is light on the far hills.

On the other hand, the pessimists are saving us from Chauvinism by contrasting the trivial, volatile, opportunist temper of our century with the heroic strenuousness of the nineteenth. Seen against its disinterested devotion to great ideas, its passionate humanitarianism, its galaxy of Titans in every field of thought, our age appears mediocre, pedestrian, futile. There may indeed be light on the hills, but of what avail is light to blind eyes? Is ours indeed the temper to which great things can come, the soil upon which high forces can operate? Are we not rather fractious children in the market place of life—unready, contrary, *difficile*, with mingled puerility and precociousness? But the pessimists are a small folk compared to the crowd of dispassionate spectators who preponderate in every age—attenuated souls who Gamaliel-wise suspend their judgment. The web is too bafflingly crossed by threads of every hue and calibre, they tell us. The pattern is too crazy, the shuttles too blindingly swift; the only rational thing to do is to wait. This attitude is too well-known to need much description; it

is the hopeless temper of the soul which forgets that there is a world in which nothing can ever come to those that wait.

We might do worse than cast a shoulder-glance back to the nineteenth century with the pessimist ; nor need we be at all afraid that our consequent self-criticism will be merely an illusion of the enchanted distance. Gloss it over as we will, there is in that century, which many among us still claim as their own, a certain heroism of temper and magnificence of character which we may dub heavy and even priggish in our lighter moods, but for the loss of which our finer conscience chides us through it all. If one would seek for a convenient and popular illustration of this temper, one might find it in " Robert Elsmere." At first sight a fictitious character, and, above all, one so anæmic and psychologically out of drawing as " Robert Elsmere," would seem an unfortunate example to choose. And quite apart from his ineffectiveness as a character in fiction, the theological and religious position he represents strikes us of to-day as amazing and all but impossible. The story of his nervous and harrowing conflict rings hollow and remote as an old-world legend, and brings nothing of the awe which such legends inspire. That a man should not only be startled out of his orthodoxy, but caught up into a struggle in which soul and reason alike reel in unspeakable anguish by nothing more formidable than a few familiar and well-

ventilated French and German theories seems less than tragic and not without a suspicion of comedy in our eyes. And yet, tenuous and neurotic as he is, and perhaps shining the more brightly against the dim background of his weakness, that nineteenth century heroism whose aureate lustre rebukes the brazen penury of our time is typified in a unique way in him. To read "Robert Elsmere" understandingly is to look into the travailing heart of his age, and to realise the force of that tremendous, tragic, all but frenzied passion with which men of that time defended the soul's citadel against the tide of apparently hostile powers that were now crashing and booming against the quivering walls, now crawling slowly and irresistibly into every cranny.

Turning from fiction to life, we get the same heroic struggle with doubt, only less typical because in a far stronger and rarer soul, in Arthur H. Clough. To read the story of his life, and his poems in the light of that story, is to get a key once more to the nineteenth century, and a tonic of fine astringency for the flabby soul of our time. Looking at his boyhood one might fairly urge that he was the victim of an over-stimulated moral sense and a premature moral development; but no one can read the story or the poems with open mind without realising that a soul-struggle so titanic and unrelieved cannot be merely the morbid excrescence of a violated

nature. Wrapped in doubt as in a shirt of Nessus, prey to a vulture of misgiving that frayed every nerve till each thread lay raw and bare, he scorned to eat the bread of compromise or to accept the intellectual opiate of his age—that peculiar mental jugglery by which men rejected God and Immortality as a fact and retained them as a highly respectable dream, a pleasant medicinal fiction. His was that ruthless candour which is like a Herod in a man's breast, killing a thousand infants of desire and sentiment, and forswears not only the dishonesty that compromises with its doubts, but the deeper dishonesty that shrinks from its convictions. Everything his conscience demanded of him was paid to the last farthing, till, thrust forth from the house of faith to walk naked among thorns, he had surrendered all save his great, deep-rooted, unflinching rectitude. And, whether we see it floating in the pale, nervous despair of " Robert Elsmere," or staring from out of the sombre agony of Arthur Clough, this heroic temper confronts us as something our age cannot match. One is often asked, Were it desirable that it should? Is it not an example of that religious panic which is the fatal infirmity of contracted minds, of that terror-stricken neurosis of the spirit, in whose red mist friends appear as foes and the battle is lost through fright before a blow has been struck? If we have lost it, is it not because our minds are saner and broader, because we realise that truth can

survive the roughest treatment, and that faith is not at the mercy of the critic or scientist? To a great extent this is true, and it is likewise true that this heroic temper of the past century was marred by self-consciousness and morbid introspection. Nevertheless, have we not lost it as much because we lack the solemn and instant sense of final issues which marked men who went before us, than because we have superseded their narrow conceptions? And is not even the blind and persecuting panic of the peasant who believes the ark of God to be in danger a nobler thing than the easy indifference of a Talleyrand? Again, it is urged that men like "Robert Elsmere" and Arthur H. Clough were exceptional, even in their strenuous age; but have we not many still among us, many who can go back to the time when they held converse with such agonists in college quadrangle or city street? No century surely has been so solemnly sanctified by a multitude of sacrificial souls, who, whether they perished amid the flames or emerged with transfigured faces, were cast into the fire for our sakes. We, looking back, see them as with cruel fillets tightened about their brows after the manner of ancient barbarisms till the eyes start and the world is awry for ever after, or paying so desperate a share of the common debt of our humanity as to be broken in woe. And if the sight stir nothing more in us than pity for their "noble error" and regret for their lack of a

sense of proportion and humour, or if it bring a covert sneer at their making mountains out of mole-hills, then (and such a view is not uncharacteristic of our time), we corroborate the gloomiest verdict of the pessimist concerning us.

It is well, then, that we should look deep and long into the mirror of the past before we give credence to the cry that our kingdom of sweetness and light is at hand. A great deal is being said in the most diverse quarters concerning the revival of the spiritual quest among us. "There never was a time," so one hears it said, "when humanity was so persistently haunted by the spiritual." In a sense this is undoubtedly true, and the growth of pseudo-mystical cults is only one of many indications of this fact; but the resurgence of the spiritual is little more than a haunting as yet, vague and elusive as a troubling dream. Most ministers of religion and other helpers of the spiritual life will admit that a faint, vagrant troubling, an intangible vexation of spirit, a shifting ache, an irksome suggestion, sum up the spiritual case of the majority of those who come to them. No modern version of the old cry, "What must I do to be saved?" has as yet become vociferous in the heart of our age. And though the *heart* of the age have many cries the *soul* remains inarticulate, except under the pressure of a sudden fall into the abyss of sin or anguish. It complains, questions, hopes, conjectures, desires, objects, sighs and sorrows; but rarely does a *cry*

rise from its depths. "I don't know what to believe," is the stereotyped expression of the soul's perplexity; but for the most part it is put querulously rather than passionately, and thus falls short of touching one's deepest sympathies. And the soul that speaks thus flutters on an aimless wing, seeks strange alliances, curious nestlings. Sometimes the issue is blind surrender to superstition, sometimes shameless abandon, sometimes grinning cynicism; how rarely either madness and despair or faith and character! Doubt abounds, but how rarely is it rooted in a sincere passion of soul! Religious aspirations abound too, but how rarely do they spring from the conscience rather than from the æsthetic sense! Spiritual ecstasy grounded on sense, a shuffling eclecticism that nibbles at this creed and at that, a dissoluteness of habit which makes real attention impossible, combine to give a trivial and impressionist character to our modern religion. We have the dropsical sentiment of the religious dilettante existing side by side with the most desolating and coarse-grained rationalism, and the violent reaction against "theology" as being too "formal" and "external" to interpret the deep cravings of the spirit coupled with a superstitious deference to Sludge the medium. A less than honourable reluctance to face central problems is marked in many "truth-seekers," and has its counterpart in preachers and writers who minister to the soul's moods and tenses, rather than to its crucial

situation. Doubtless the increasing number of the semi-cultured is largely responsible for that aspect of things. "The Religion of a Literary Man" is only "Happy Billy, the Converted Pork Butcher" after attending a course of University extension lectures. In the field of philosophy and theology this staccato and impressionist quality is almost as strongly marked. The general atmosphere is one of brilliant but fugitive perceptions, vagrant insights, fragmentary and suggestive power. Of sustained and systematic work there is deplorable paucity. In philosophy there is a tendency to devote much time and thought to the interpretation of moods, the illumination of interesting side-issues, and specialisation in obscure corners of the field. In theology systematic work is almost exclusively confined to criticism; for the rest we have small books on small subjects, and are developing a new casuistry which deals pleasantly and adroitly with the application of a vaguely defined Gospel to a variety of minor situations. In popular ethics alone is the situation different. There a whole-hearted revolt, partly against conventional ethics and partly against distinctively Christian ethics, lends verve and colour to the situation. Nietzsche has at last descended upon England, at least in such coarse refractions of his doctrine as Mr. H. G. Wells—a writer who compels one's respect on account of his burning earnestness—has familiarised us with. Here is a clear-cut issue

which Christian thought is meeting bravely by a translation of its own ethic from passive and negative blamelessness into personal energy, from convention into holy passion, from asceticism into self-asseveration of life.

Having gone far enough with the pessimist we would turn to the prophet who sees light on the hills. There is much in the temper of our time to turn that light into darkness ; yet the truth lies not with the pessimist but with the seer. We cannot lift our eyes from the valley to the hills without seeing the dawn-flush. We cannot turn from the man in the street to the man in the foremost files of thought without realising that a new world is descending upon us. Nothing is more conducive to blindness than our preoccupation with the man in the street. The man in the street should rightly occupy our respectful attention ; to fling cheap sneers at him is to proclaim oneself a petty provincial of thought. But this much is clear : that we could help him in far truer comradeship if we did not so persistently make him the standard and measure of all things. We could indeed anticipate, if not prevent, one half of his troubles by turning from his innocent mind to the minds in which his troubles really originate and to the leaders who see the relieving cloud on the far horizon. What say the prophets, then ?

It has become the merest commonplace to say that the most hopeful feature of the present

situation is found in the common bankruptcy of the rival systems of Naturalism and Intellectualism and their supersession by a new vitalistic philosophy ; and while such a statement is true enough, its stereotyped use frequently covers certain quite elementary but remarkably widespread and tenacious misconceptions. We still, for instance, tend to slip back into that characteristically nineteenth-century identification of naturalism with the general attitude of scientists towards the things of the spirit, or with the bearing of the results of natural science upon these things. We forget that natural science is to-day the most cautious, and even diffident, of all movements towards knowledge, and need to be occasionally reminded of the stern check given to scientific over-confidence by such discoveries as that of radium, or, still more strikingly, of that all-pervading substance we call ether, out of which we may be unconsciously weaving the vesture of our immortality. " What do we know with the certainty of science," asks Haeckel, the arch-dogmatist, " about the nature of matter, force, gravitation, ether, optics, the atomic theory, chemistry ? " On every hand, indeed, the stark cocksureness of one section of scientists is breaking down, at the edges at least, while the reverent agnosticism of another section is tending more and more to be replaced by an equally reverent adventure upon the Unseen. Naturalism, on the other hand, is the philosophy of the man who has sub-

scribed to the dogma of the subjectibility of all forms of being to the principles and methods of science ; who believes, in other words, that natural science is the exclusive measure of all forms of truth or possibility. This position presupposes science to be an absolute—something fixed and complete in itself which the mind can view from the outside, as it were, and towards which it can only exercise a descriptive function. Granting this, we must, of course, accept the postulates of science as ultimate expressions of truth, and surrender to a blind mechanical determinism. But this is nothing else than a relapse into mediæval scholasticism—the petrifaction of the living word into a dead system, and modern thought refuses such a naïvely "external" view. We can no longer regard science, even in its most ultimate principles, as "outside" the human mind, but must conceive it as an activity of that mind which can only be understood in reference to the thought that created it and wields it. To rescue science from the spectral realm of mechanism and restore it to its own place within that life of the spirit which is its source is the aim of a truly vitalistic philosophy. It may be urged that naturalism does not deny the activity of the mind, but, on the contrary, gives an ever-increasing emphasis and care to its consideration. But this does not really touch the vital issue, the question being, not whether the mind or "spirit" is a thing capable of acting, but

whether it is itself action and life, creating and self-creative. Naturalism, while admitting, and even emphasising, mental activity, declares it to be derivative—a mere continuation of natural process and, where it does not follow the laws of natural process, a mere by-product, an ineffective accompaniment.

Again, it is the fashion to pour a certain facile and half-contemptuous disparagement upon intellectualism. This is partly due to oblivion of the fact that it was intellectualism that first undermined the crude metaphysics of materialism and largely caused the mechanical theory of life to fall into disrepute, partly to the circumstance that, unlike the naturalistic philosophy, intellectualism never more than scratched the surface of the pragmatic British mind. The commonly accepted view of intellectualism is that it stands for a mercilessly consistent and coldly impersonal philosophy which reduces everything to unreality except the philosopher's own excogitations. Hegel, who is made responsible for the widely diverse and hybrid developments conveniently classed together as British Hegelianism, is regarded as thought incarnate, the idea made flesh, in the sense of holding a conception of thought from which will and emotion are completely excluded—a popular assumption which does not gain in convincing force through much repetition. According to this one-eyed view intellectualism stands condemned because it falls into the opposite fallacy

to that of naturalism, exalting the mind to the sole reality and reducing the sense-word to an illusion. While this is true in a well-defined sense, it obscures the main issue, the more crucial fact being that both naturalism and intellectualism share in the same denial of the free, creative activity of the spirit, subjecting it in the one case to the laws which govern the sense-world, in the other to the laws of thought. In the one case we have mechanical, in the other logical, determinism, intellectualism reducing freedom to the mere recognition of, and acquiescence in, logical necessity. Just as naturalism views science as an absolute, so intellectualism regards philosophy as existing by and for itself and developing through its own internal dialectic. And while intellectualism frees us from the tyranny of the immediately given and the bondage of sense, it commits suicide at the very point of its victory by surrendering freedom and personality as really, if not as palpably and explicitly, as naturalism. To quote the terse presentation of the case given by Mr. Hector Macpherson in his volume on Spencer :—" For all practical purposes it signifies little whether mind is the temporary embodiment of a spiritual principle, or a specialised form of matter. In either case man is a bubble on the great stream of time. We may discourse of the bubble in the language of Hegelianism or materialism. The result is the same—absorption in the universal. Both systems leave man a prisoner in the hands of

necessity. The only difference is that while materialism puts round the prisoner's neck a plain, unpretentious noose, Hegelianism adds fringes and embroidery. The one passes sentence of death, while the other indulges in a poetic funeral oration."

Turning to the philosophy of the future, we find that the general mind is apt to conceive of it as a somewhat coarse-fibred pragmatism, often taking the shape of a strongly ethical voluntarism. Pragmatism is especially congenial to the religious mind, and it should be noted that, even when most deeply bitten with the metaphysical microbe, theology has always been kept wholesomely pragmatic by its contact with the Gospel of the Christ of history and of experience. To the popular religious imagination the pragmatism of the late lamented Professor William James, as it has filtered through numberless elementary exponents of this doctrine, makes a very strong appeal. A religion that " works " is the favourite *desideratum* of the man in the street, the " working " generally being interpreted in the most immediate and impressionist sense. Thus it is that the Salvation Army officer, the medical missionary and the slum sister are the popular types of saintliness and heroism, while the thinker, the teacher and the contemplative are good-humouredly tolerated as amiable and harmless dreamers on the back-streets of life. But looking away from the popularised pragmatism, beloved

of a generation "greedy for quick returns of profit," and impatient of thought-movements which it deems to be a mere esoteric amusement for professors of philosophy, we find a tendency to take pragmatism with somewhat greater seriousness than it warrants, crediting it with the fixity of a system. Pragmatism, however, is still rather a criticism of absolute notions in philosophy, and a gallant attempt to extricate it from the *impasse* of agnosticism, than a system. Its force must be sought in its trenchant critique of thinkers who hold not only that there is an Absolute, but that we can arrive at a clear understanding of its nature, and in its brave and salutary attack upon the delusion that mankind can afford to wait and suspend judgment and action while the philosophers make up their minds at their leisure. But a philosophy which sees the world as "tangled, muddy, painful and perplexed" and its great processes as "vast driftings" or "cosmic weather," yet bids men believe in a God and a goodness for which it can find no objective basis because it is good and profitable and "helpful" so to believe, is not a thing that "works" for any but anarchist and bankrupt minds. It is a counsel of despair, not a rallying cry for a new and hopeful age. Yet many conceive of the philosophy of the future as a development of pragmatism, and, strangely enough, claim Eucken as a representative of this tendency. As a matter of fact, the very aspect of Eucken's philosophy

which invites a comparison with pragmatism—*i.e.*, his activism—is sharply opposed to it; and jaded souls, content, after wild flutterings among imperfectly assimilated systems, to decline upon a meretricious philosophy which makes religion a servile ministrant to human conditions and needs, can do no better than go to Eucken for the astringent their relaxed fibre indicates.

Voluntarism, again, is an aspect of pragmatism peculiarly attractive to the religious mind anxious to defend and commend the faith. In the great ethicising movement in philosophy which asserts the primacy of the moral and the hegemony of the will among the faculties, these apologists see the link which will in the future bind philosophy and theology together, and they frequently understand it as a voluntarism less metaphysical than the romantic voluntarism of Schopenhauer, and slightly less epistemological than the English type, but rather as predominately ethical as that of Paulsen and Sigwart. It must be remembered, however, that while this ethicising movement, whose roots go back to the anti-Hegelian reaction which shook the mind of Germany in the years between 1840 and 1880, is entirely valid in its insistence upon the critical momentum of the volitional side of experience, any attempt to make the will supreme not only lands us in intellectual anarchy, but makes religion impossible except by way of a moral positivism which leaves mankind free to worship—itself. Again Eucken is claimed

as a voluntarist by many, but his repudiation of voluntarism leaves nothing to be desired in clearness and emphasis.

What, then, are those rays of light on the far hills that point to a new and redemptive day in the history of thought? First and most generally, a profound dissatisfaction with modern civilisation and culture as they affect man's *spiritual* life. We have passed through a salutary reaction from the hollow and specious Manchester theory, with its cackle of "happiness for the greatest number" and its bitter fruits of squalor, degradation and degeneracy; and the generous sentiment which has sent so many of the best minds and bravest hearts into the slum and the sweater's den is now being translated from terms of personal humanism and altruism into terms of the largest and most realistic public ethic. Hitherto the social conscience has agreed with popular pragmatism in glorifying the thing that "works" most quickly and apparently in raising the submerged and ameliorating their conditions of life. We are just emerging—barely emerging—from a temper to which the man who cries for bread makes a more real and poignant appeal than the soul that crieth out for the living God, and which accounts the man who evolves a "darkest England" scheme a greater hero than the man who "merely" thinks and prays. To our passionate arraignment of modern civilisation and culture on the count of its callousness

and brutality to the toiling and unprivileged masses we are adding the deeper indictment of injustice and damage to the spiritual life of man, taking that term in its broadest signification. Slowly we are learning to believe the hackneyed truth that the central guilt and sting of all cruelty to body and estate is spiritual, and that a Herod's massacre of innocents is not so black a crime as the extinction in a single human soul of those "noble thoughts that pass across the heart of every man like great white birds." Tardily we are coming to see the essential triviality, vulgarity and heartlessness of unredeemed refinement and culture, the coarse selfishness and veiled sensuality at the core of romantic æstheticism, the stultifying influence of a pedestrian and conventional morality and its menace to true ethics, and the spiritual stupefaction and demoralisation consequent upon a civilisation which patronises Christianity.

And it is not from pulpits and theological colleges that this new appreciation of the Christian point of view comes, but from the philosophers and scientists, the essayists and novelists. Men everywhere are feeling the hollowness, the contradiction, the spiritual bankruptcy of our sleek and well-to-do culture. Now it is Nietzsche whose sensitive impressionist soul, restlessly reconnoitring and nervously fumbling after the inward life, recoils sharply from a blatant and self-conscious culture that wears

down the fine edge of the individual and buries worth beneath a *mêlée* of fictitious and vicious values. And though incurable neurosis gave a crude and rasping touch to his revolt, and his subjective emotionalism failed in achieving its own end of inward sufficiency, yet that revolt was noble in itself, and much blame rests with those followers who perversely underscored its most vicious aspects. Now it is the sad voice of Frederic Myers making complaint of the inward dispeace of our time and the pitiful smallness of spiritual satisfaction in proportion to spiritual need. In sharp contrast comes the crisp matter-of-fact voice of that *plein air* personality, Dr. Widney, reminding us that primitive man never shuddered in such bewilderment and helplessness of soul before the unknown forces of nature as cultured man shudders to-day—though his fear be wrapped up in nonchalance or rationalism—before the self-made monster of a civilisation which he only half comprehends, and which must enslave and crush him, unless indeed he can find it in his heart to conquer through faith in the "All-Father." Maeterlinck recalls us in silver tones from the inutile noises we call life to listen to eternity murmuring on the horizon, to heed the silence, the quivering voice of light, the unseen goodness, the deeper life, the passing thought, the inner beauty; to turn from the jangling of the schools to those reservoirs of certitude whither the pale herd of souls flock every morning to

slake their thirst. And at the opposite edge Mr. G. K. Chesterton sums up the situation in his chuckling description of a man going to a political meeting and making a speech, warmly protesting against the natives of the Congo being treated as beasts, and then putting his silk hat on his head, and his umbrella under his arm, and walking hurriedly down the street to a meeting of scientists where he delivers an elaborate lecture to prove that they are beasts. But of all the voices that are being raised against the incoherency and unreality of our civilisation none falls with greater gravity and stringency than that of Professor Rudolf Eucken, who sees behind the outer ostentation of our culture an emptiness that is worse than pain. In a long and characteristic passage he thus delivers his soul :—" It is not only at particular points that civilisation does not correspond to the demands of spiritual life, but that civilisation, as a whole, is in many ways in conflict with those demands. We feel, with increasing distress, the wide interval between the varied and important work to be done at the circumference of life and the complete emptiness at the centre. When we take an inside view of life we find that a life of mere bustling routine preponderates, that men struggle and boast and strive to outdo one another, that unlimited ambition and vanity are characteristic of individuals, that they are always running to and fro, and pressing forward, or feverishly exercising all their powers. But throughout it all

we come upon nothing that gives any real value to life and nothing spiritually elevating. Hence we do not find any meaning and value in life, but in the end a single huge show in which culture is reduced to a burlesque. Anyone who thinks it all over and reflects upon the difference between the enormous labour that has been expended and the accompanying gain to the essentials of life must either be driven to complete negation and despair, or must seek new ways of guaranteeing a value to life and liberating men from the sway of the pettily human. But this will force men to resume the quest for inner connections."

Another significant element of modern thought is found in the ever-growing recognition of the truth-value of religion. From William James, to whose philosophical rectitude the rapture of the God-intoxicated soul was so sore a temptation, and who snatched religious experience from its mean position in the psychology of the schools and the laboratory and gave the impetus to an autonomous psychology of religion, to Rudolf Eucken, who makes religion practically co-extensive with the whole spiritual life of man, the philosophical interest in religion has moved from the realm of mere patronage, or even sympathetic appreciation, to a reverent and solemn recognition of its uniqueness and autonomy. Henri Bergson, again, while he has not yet given us the promised treatise on religion which is to crown his philosophy, holds and stirs the wider public, not so much by the

vivid actuality and brilliant lucidity of his thought, as by that insistence upon the primacy of the soul which rings through and under his critique of intuition like a sunken bell. It is significant that in France James's "Varieties of Religious Experience," with its suggestion of a new Christian Apologetic based upon vital contact with the Unseen, together with Bergson's doctrine of intuition as the great highway to Truth, has given an unprecedented impulse to neo-Catholicism, not only inspiring a fresh study of the great mystics, but awakening an interest in metaphysical thought. In Protestant countries, notably in Germany and in England, it is Eucken's valuation of religion, and specifically of Christianity as the "characteristic" and absolute religion, that is most potently fructifying thought both within and without the Churches. While exercising a radical and not always quite convincing critique upon the existing form of Christianity, Eucken has shown that even such defective and purblind appropriation as mankind has been able to make of the teaching of Jesus has raised the life of the spirit to an unprecedented power and freedom, and enriched the world's thought with elements of unique and abiding preciousness. It is not too much to say that since Descartes there has never been a period in which the foremost elements in philosophic thought have fused so intimately not only with the religious aspirations of the universal soul, but also with the theological and experimental interest

in redemption. For the first time since the great metaphysical period of ecclesiastical dogma philosophy is tending once more to become a doctrine of redemption, and the old cry, " What must I do to be saved ? " is whispering itself once more to the restless heart of a too early wearied age, and to the churning mind of an experimental and adventurous generation of thinkers. And while the long and sharp contention between philosophy and religion is not ended yet, the battle is now at close range and on common ground.

But perhaps the most salient feature in the present thought-scape is the growing conviction that the pathway to reality is not by the mere intellect. Broadly speaking, only two eddies, interlocked and yeasting, ruffle the pools of thought to-day—the problem of knowledge, How can one thing know another ? and the problem of freedom, How can the free initiative and purpose of man be reconciled with the element of necessity in things on which the possibility of knowledge seems to depend ? Naturalism wiped out one ripple with a clean dead sweep, and, boldly surrendering to necessity, achieved at least the *succès d'estime* which belongs to the dully and bluntly consistent. Intellectualism, in its gallant effort to liberate the human spirit from the iron bars of determinism by a show of " logical freedom," delivered it from imprisonment into despotism. It left us with a loss of moral dignity and spiritual initiative which is the inevitable consequence of a consistent

acceptance of any system that conceives of the world's movement as a process, be that process mechanical or intellectual. In the reaction which followed upon the Hegelian vogue, men's thoughts shifted from the conception of mere truth and concentrated more and more upon life which is neither a closed logical system nor a mechanism, neither a shadow nor a thing, but an energy, a will. And if our philosophy is to be a philosophy of life as will, power, spirit, then the right solution of the problem of knowledge must be involved in the practical solution of the problem of freedom; in other words, we have to recognise the primacy of the moral in knowledge. Modern philosophical work is borne by the conviction that truth lies in the realm of freedom, and to go questing in that realm the adventurer needs something more than the staff of logic; he needs the wings of an energy free and spontaneous as the truth he seeks—a moral and passionate self-asseveration of life; not so much the will to believe as the kind of will that can believe the truth; and not merely the mind to see visions, but the energy to create values.

Thus Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, who is by no means merely the riotous philosophical swashbuckler that immature criticism would make him, tells us that our system of ethical values determines the premises of our reasoning: we must be good in order to know the truth. Eucken, while safeguarding himself against the imputation of voluntarism which, he submits, can do no more

than replace one form of onesideness by another, and while claiming for religion the security of a speculative basis, yet insists that it is man's attitude to life which matters most for his knowledge of the truth. Bergson, whose critique of intuition is perhaps the most forceful tributary to the tide of this ethicising movement, challenges the intellect's theoretic authority in principle, denies that logic can tell us what is possible or impossible in the world of being or fact, reduces the mind to the means by which we find our way about in the material universe, says it was devised in the development of man for the purpose of knowing and handling matter, and is therefore something of a constitutional materialist. It may, however, have slumbering at its heart undeveloped potencies and capacities, and by being united to the will and plunged into the ocean of experience, it may obtain sure knowledge of what is of priceless value for man's spiritual life. In other words, we are dependent for our true knowledge of reality upon the intuition arising from the unity of will and intelligence, and through intuition intellect will be regenerated and come into its true kingdom.

How these three main elements of modern thought are seen to shape themselves in the philosophies of Rudolf Eucken and Henri Bergson, and how, through the influence of these great thinkers, they must affect Christian thought and contribute to the theology of the future will be considered in the course of the following chapters.

II

Rudolf Eucken and his Philosophy of Life

CHAPTER II

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Eucken's life and work—His chief writings characterised—His philosophical antecedents—The Protagonist of a new Idealism—His critique of Naturalism and Intellectualism, and his defence of the Free Personality—From Individualism to Personality : the Negative Movement—His Philosophy as a Cosmic-personal and Religious Idealism—His Activism—His Philosophy of History : the living past—The Socialised Personality and the cult of the Superman—A Christianity for "enjoying" souls—His Irrationalism and neglect of Psychology—His significance for the present situation in British thought.

CHAPTER II

Rudolf Eucken and his Philosophy of Life

It is now some three years since Professor Eucken has broken upon the slowly-shifting horizon of British thought, somewhat grudgingly saluted by the schoolmen, but evoking so swift and complete a homage from a wider and—dare one say?—a less trammelled and more discerning public, that it seems hard to believe that he has so many years of pathbreaking and fruitful work behind him. Emerging into prominence when German philosophical thought was deep in the trough of the anti-Hegelian reaction, when naturalism was beginning to fray and crumble at the edges, and churning minds, beggared of a satisfactory explanation of life, were seeking desperate alliances with the pessimism of Schopenhauer, the positivism of Comte, and the subjective emotionalism of Nietzsche, Eucken met the situation with his philosophy of the life of the spirit. Naturalism had bred on the one hand an incredible coarseness of mental fibre and psychic sensibility, on the other hand an almost hysterical scepticism. Intellectualism in its decadence had produced a crop of dialectical *petits-maîtres* who, with an

amazing moral astigmatism, viewed the problem of the universe as an exceedingly interesting puzzle to be solved by the key-word of a logical category, and, under semblance of disinterested devotion to speculative thought, debased philosophy into "a professional game" out of all relation to life. Against these nerveless and flat phases of thought Eucken's experimental and vitalistic temper strikes sharp upon one's consciousness. Looking over the philosophical entanglement and fatigue of his age, he saw in the impact of rival systems not a conflict of theories, but a meeting of hostile world-powers—organisations of life (Lebenssysteme) rooted in definite historical movements rather than mere systematisations of theory (Lehrsysteme). This change of terminology is significant of the very core of his vitalistic view of the world.

Born in 1846 at Aurich, East Frisia, Eucken owed his earliest and most lasting religious impressions to one of his school teachers, Wilhelm Reuter, himself a pupil of that remarkable and unjustly all but forgotten philosopher, K. Ch. F. Krause, whose vitalistic philosophy makes him a true precursor of Eucken. It was not Reuter's philosophical training, however—a training received not only from Krause, but from Hegel himself—which set so deep a mark on Eucken thus early. It was rather his deep experimental interest in religious problems and his linking up of these problems with philosophy that caused

this strictly orthodox Lutheran teacher to exercise so potent and permanent an influence upon the boy who was later to break away from all dogmatic tradition. As a university student, first at Göttingen and then at Berlin, Eucken was more influenced by the books he read than by the men he heard. Lotze failed to attract him, possibly because of the frigidity of his mind. Teichmüller, on the other hand, introduced him to the study of Aristotle; and Trendelenburg, while failing to secure his adherence to his system as a whole, impressed him deeply by the ethical character of his thought, and by his endeavour to relate philosophy and history. After leaving the University and spending some years in teaching, Eucken accepted a call to Bâle, Switzerland, as professor of philosophy in 1871, where he published one of the most important of his Aristotelian studies. In 1874 he was called to Jena, Germany, where he remains to this day.

In addition to the characteristic and indefinable glamour that hangs about a small university town for all who carry the student heart amid the dull routine of life, Jena is dowered with a past in which the most illustrious names of romance, literature and philosophy are interwoven. With Weimar it shares the glory of having harboured Schiller and Goethe. There the Romantic movement made a home for itself in the brothers Schlegel, and there also taught the philosophers who were most closely related to that movement,

Schelling and Fichte, the latter of whom had to meet a bigoted charge of atheism, and shook the dust of Jena off his feet to continue his lustrous path in Berlin. But the pride of Jena centres round Hegel, whose Napoleonic sympathies, however, secured his expulsion. Coming down to recent times, the roll-call of Jena includes such names as Kuno Fischer, Karl Hase, and Richard Lipsius, and at the present day two names divide the international honours—Haeckel and Eucken, antipodeans in conviction, method and temperament.

Eucken enjoys to-day a truly cosmopolitan reputation, and perhaps no other German professor of philosophy can boast of such a world-wide discipleship. Students from all quarters of the earth, including such remote regions as Iceland, flock to sit at the feet of a man whose idealism not only serves as a philosophical rallying-ground for all who are engaged in the struggle for a concrete spiritual experience, but finds expression in a singularly attractive and benignant personality whose influence reinforces its teaching in a characteristic and indelible way. Among his past students he numbers many prominent men in all departments of life, and a very large proportion of ministers of religion, including a member of the Greek Patriarchate, and not a few in the Roman Church. His relations with his British students have always been of the happiest, and he is conscious of a very deep affinity with the

Anglo-Saxon race. At present his influence is spreading to Japan, where some of his most important writings, translated into Japanese, are moving the noblest minds in the direction of a new spiritual ideal ; and an ever-increasing number of students from this remarkable country are making the pilgrimage to Jena. The award of the Nobel Prize to Eucken in 1908 gave a powerful impetus to the translation of his books, and it is from this event that his English vogue dates.

Eucken's work falls naturally into two periods—the historical and critical, and the constructive, divided by a transition period. To the first belong his early Aristotelian studies, his " History of Philosophical Terminology," and his " Fundamental Concepts of the Present Day " in its first form. In this latter volume the crystallisation of long processes of thought into concepts finds a most penetrative and luminous analytical treatment, and this book is his characteristic prolegomenon to his own philosophy. The transition period is marked by the third edition of this book, under a new title, " Spiritual Movements (Strömungen) of the Present Day," marking Eucken's characteristic reaction against intellectualism. In this edition the critical discussion is explicitly inspired by and made ministrant to the fundamental convictions of the new Idealism which afterwards came to be associated with his name. A more popular and attractive, but not, to my mind, more important link between the two

periods is found in "The Problem of Human Life, as Viewed by the Great Thinkers from Plato to the Present Time"—perhaps the "classical" work of Eucken, combining a wealth of sheer learning with a clarity of exposition, a charm of presentation, and an appreciative independence of judgment. The constructive period includes "The Unity of the Spiritual Life," comprising also a volume of prolegomena, "The Struggle for a Concrete Spiritual Experience," "The Meaning and Value of Life," and "Life's Basis and Life's Ideal: Fundamentals of a New Philosophy of Life"; also the following, dealing more specifically with the problem of religion: "The Truth of Religion," "The Essence of Religion," "The Main Problems of the Philosophy of Religion at the Present Time," and his latest, "Can we still be Christians?" "The Struggle for a Concrete Spiritual Experience" is perhaps the most revealingly characteristic of Eucken's philosophical individuality, while "Life's Basis and Life's Ideal" is not only the most elaborate and exhaustive, and, therefore, the most important for a thorough grasp of his system, but its luminous discussion of the ideas of Truth and Reality makes it also of peculiar value to the reader with theological interests. "The Unity of the Spiritual Life" is fundamental for the study of Eucken, and "The Meaning and Value of Life" represents a most successful effort to awaken in the educated mind a vital and experimental interest in the great

life-problems. Among the books dealing specifically with the philosophy of religion, his monumental work, " The Truth of Religion," gives the surest insight into Eucken's characteristic handling and interpretation of the problem, and contains his religious philosophy in its most fully developed form. For my own part I would emphasise the brief and popular " Main Problems " for its peculiar fertility of suggestiveness. His latest book, " Can we still be Christians ? " is especially interesting as not only throwing a flood of light upon Eucken's own dogmatic, or rather undogmatic position, but as illustrating the religious situation in Germany to-day, and doing so all the more clearly—one had almost said luridly—because by way of unconscious side-lights.

Students may find the first approach to Eucken a little less than smooth on account of his comparatively severe and bare style. In sharp contrast to Bergson, whose illustrative genius is at once a charm and a snare, there are next to no poppies among the corn of Eucken's exposition. Moreover, he has neither the chromaticism of temperament, nor the sonority, colour and rhythm of verbal music that make Schopenhauer and Nietzsche such a beguilement to read. Nor has he any of that *esprit* and that almost journalistic lightness and impressionism of touch which the modern epicure of mind expects even from the gravest teacher, nor again that Socratic irony and homeliness which find their modern exemplar in

Sören Kierkegaard. Nevertheless, his style will on closer acquaintance be found to be a clear and worthy vehicle of his thought, rising at times to a grave and sober eloquence, at times to a high and noble persuasiveness, at others to an impelling and searching appeal. Once the initial impression of stark inflexibility is overcome, it will appear a fitting garment to every shade of his thought and many threads of beauty will be discovered in its web.

With regard to Eucken's position in the history of philosophy and his philosophical antecedents, he himself mentions Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Plotinus, Kant and Hegel, as having influenced him most profoundly, and to this list we must of course add Fichte, with whom he has many deep affinities. His discussion of Augustine is marked not only by the highest degree of philosophical acumen, but by undisguised admiration for a personality from whom, he declares, all times and all minds may gain strength and inspiration in their struggle with the great permanent problems of human life. Perhaps the influence of Augustine upon his thinking may be described as preponderatingly negative, operating by way of re-action. Thus one can trace a sympathetic but sharply critical study of the Augustinian doctrine of Grace and Predestination in Eucken's vindication of freedom and in his conception of spiritual activity as an interpenetration of the human and the Divine. The influence of Plato,

Aristotle, and Plotinus need not be traced in detail here. I have singled out Augustine to illustrate Eucken's characteristic hospitality to problems generally relegated to theology; while an intellectualistic system may bar out theology, the barrier breaks down when we pass to a philosophy of life. Coming to his more immediate philosophical antecedents, we find him, in common with all modern thinkers, accepting Kant's fundamental principle, but sharply questioning the Kantian doctrine of the phenomenal character of inward experience, and, in consequence, of time. With Hegel he has many superficial affinities, and his adoption of the familiar three-stage scheme, and the emphasis he lays on the negative movement, make them appear far deeper than they really are. In reality he stands in sheer opposition to Hegel on at least three fundamental points, differing from him in philosophical method, in his activistic conception of the life of the spirit, and in his valuation of history. With Fichte his affinities are deeper. In his anti-individualism, anti-intellectualism, and theological convictions, they go deep indeed; but here again there is a sharp line of separation, especially in their respective attitudes towards experience and in their view of religion. While Eucken's philosophy may be described as a vitalistic rehandling of classic concepts, as a matter of emphasis as much as of discovery, as "a new culture, rather than a new category,"

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(Boyce Gibson), yet at every point of its development his originality asserts itself even as against the greatest of his antecedents, and as the protagonist of a new Idealism he must be regarded as a pioneer.

To get a preliminary view of the struggle for this new Idealism which Eucken so triumphantly represents, and of the crux of the problem involved, one might profitably start from a consideration of the relation of man to nature as conceived at the main stages in the development of thought.

To the Greeks as represented by Plato or Aristotle nature was not merely susceptible of the Divine, but, to a certain extent, herself divine. This meant that the human spirit could find the sustenance of its life in nature and seek in her a reflection of those laws of eternal reason which govern spirit. In Christianity nature, from being the mirror and emanation of God, fell to the rank of a mere "thing," something external to spirit and created *ex nihilo*. This meant, on the one hand, a loss of that sense of mystery, beauty and wonder which made Greek art immortal. On the other hand, it secured to the spirit a coming to itself—a consciousness of its own uniqueness. Asserting itself against a nature which lacked the bread by which spirit lives, it made for self-assevération, freedom of action, original development. With the evolution of science in the modern sense of the term the problem entered upon a new

phase. At first science was content to explain the so-called material processes by its own laws, and to stop short before the mysteries of life and thought. But soon, as we have already seen, came the encroachment of a naturalism which subjected all forms of being to its laws and methods, and man became part of nature, a mere cog in the great wheel. At the same time the old security in God as a refuge from the crushing forces of mechanical process was shaken by a new criticism of the conception of God. The popular God was found to be largely no more than nature personified; the transcendental God evaded thought and vanished into thin air at the impact of speculation. Thus the problem of how to secure the franchise for the spiritual life took a sharp and tormenting form. "How," it was asked, "can we find a guarantee for the free and self-originated life of the spirit in face of the fact that for us spirit is indissolubly wedded to matter, whose laws are self-sufficing and all-subjecting?" On the face of it, it is a short and easy course to surrender to naturalism; it only needs a lethargic acquiescence in the natural order, a lazy assent to that law of passivity and inaction which fixes the spirit in furrows of convention, mediocrity and torpor. And supposing we revolt against so mechanical and degrading a theory, have we any *right* to do so, any ground other than our own individual discontent and caprice? To intellectualism belongs the honour of having made front against

naturalism without capitulating to subjectivism; but intellectualism, as we have also seen, subjected life to logic, and reduced reality to speculative principles which were quite as stark and impenetrable as the naturalist "facts." It represents the effort of the jaded spirit to find rest in reconstructing a universe of contradictions by means of a system of *a priori* (by which the intellectualist means necessary) thought; in other words, to win the peace that cometh by understanding. But this contradictory reality of ours does not allow the mind to find peace in that way, for it is alive and creative, and therefore irreducible to *a priori* principles. Whenever we think we have so reduced her, she attests her vital originality by escaping and disproving our intellectual abstractions which are after all only the fruit of our limited observation and our equally limited mental adaptability to the free and incalculable movement of life. Thus intellectualism, while triumphantly asserting the superiority and originality of spirit over against nature, fails in placing that spirit *in vacuo*. The solution of the problem can only be found in a point of view which, while refusing to sink spirit in the operations of nature and securing its independence and creative life, does full justice to the independent reality of the sense-world and to its connection with the life of the spirit.

Eucken's solution of the problem appeals to the best mind of to-day as the most vital and

valid as yet offered, and his concrete idealism may well serve, as it does, as the rallying point for all such constructive efforts. Reviewing the rival syntagmata of naturalism and intellectualism, his critique is marked not only by a rare penetration and cogency, but by that sympathetic fairness which shows his practical consistency with his own principle of freedom. A study of Eucken's examination of the two great rival syntagmata is the best possible introduction to his thought, and the student should first turn to " The Unity of the Spiritual Life," considered by many, including Dr. Boyce Gibson, to be the highway to Eucken's philosophy, and then trace the same subject in " The Struggle for Spiritual Experience," where it is treated in a different and very striking way. Having passed the rival syntagmata under review, and shown that they agree in banishing freedom and personality from the Universe, Eucken rejects the abstract principle of agreement which makes the truth to lie in whatever is common to two rival theories (a process which, of course, leaves their differences unreconciled), and, applying his own reductive method, finds the unifying principle in *personality*. On the one hand, as against Naturalism, he secures the reality of the spirit by giving it a fastness in the Absolute, and conceives the supreme spiritual life as realised in and by man but transcending man's appropriation and standing independent of (though not external to)

the very experience which realises it. In this way we get the conception of a spiritual experience which is neither subjective emotion nor intellectual abstraction, but life and action. On the other hand, as against Intellectualism, he does not make the spirit function *in vacuo*; it realises itself by acting upon a real sense-world, attracting, penetrating and transfiguring it. He neither subjects it to natural process, nor regards it as above nature in the Kantian "noumenal" sense, but conceives it as at once realising the sense-world and using it for its own self-realisation. And to maintain and vindicate the freedom and originality of personality against world-powers which would either make our life a mere pendant to the process of nature, or an episode in the life of a Hegelian God, is not only a speculative philosophy, but a moral venture. It is a heroic crusade against all lethargy and mediocrity, a passionate assertion of the eternal Yea. It is enquiry and reason; it is also faith and adventure. When thought has done its maturest work and we know all we can know concerning the free, creative life of the spirit, we must still dare and venture. We must, in fact, risk a wager, and may comfort ourselves with Pascal's famous *mot* that the man who refuses to venture upon faith, wagers all the same. This does not mean, of course, that Eucken's philosophy lacks speculative basis. It would be difficult, indeed, to find a thinker of greater weight, thoroughness and grasp. Moving

with a certain degree of caution, his analysis is both acute and comprehensive, and his constructive work massively built up and carefully articulated ; but at the heart of his philosophy is a spiritual adventure. Out of his pages a light shines into the darkness of the great human problems, and that light is not abstract truth but the life of men, eternal life which is the gift of God and the passionate and perilous quest of the soul. Taking personality as the central idea, we will now try and illuminate it from various aspects of Eucken's thought.

From Individualism to Personality : the Negative Movement

We begin as individuals nestling within the narrow circle of our petty egoist interests ; we are called to end as personalities and co-workers with God. This spiritual exodus takes place through a "negative movement." Eucken adopts the familiar Hegelian three-stage scheme : (1) the stage of nature, in which life is lived under the authority of sense, expediency and convention ; (2) the negative stage, in which the individual breaks with the natural life and comes into touch with the life of the absolute Spirit ; (3) the reconstructive stage, in which, having received spiritual liberty, he takes the world-problem upon himself, and returns to the old world to assist in its spiritual reconstitution in the light of the new. But here the resemblance ends. Instead

of resolving itself into the flat and vapid notion of a God returning to Himself and redeeming Himself in a blank solitude where no human cry ever finds reverberation, we have a real active negation of a real world, a struggle in which the spirit challenges and vindicates its own freedom and underived reality, and puts its own validity to the supreme test. This negative movement is, therefore, not a re-interpretation of the world *sub specie æternitatis*, nor a return from the illusion of a *world* to the reality of a Pantheistic *God*, but an individual struggle from nature to spirit, a contest in which man is the gladiator, not merely the stadium. Whenever a human soul feels the contradiction of life, not as a logical riddle, but as his own life-problem, the negative movement has begun. Whenever conventional ideals and low contents, mean standards and petty aims, are regarded not as illusions to be outgrown but as insults to personal freedom and foes of the spiritual life, the pilgrim is *in via*. It is not, however, until this negative movement, which is sustained through the whole process of spiritual upbuilding, combines with a positive conviction that the break with the given is complete, and can be followed by a victorious return upon it in the power of a new world. And this triumphant descent comes through a new immediacy of spiritual experience. The spirit, breaking with the past and pressing ever more closely against the most inward and secret springs of its being, challenging and ques-

tioning, searching and testing, struggling with all the passion of one who has " burnt his boats " for a certain conviction of its freedom and validity, becomes susceptible to the presence and power of the redemptive activity of God. Freedom finds its guarantee in grace ; moral action its source in a salvation " straight from God." Thus the ethical break with sense becomes a religious awakening and renewal, and Eucken's thought a philosophy of conversion. At the threshold of the spiritual life is a great alternative—not the *pro* and *contra* of speculative reason, but a moral choice involving the whole man. In this choice the personality chooses or rejects itself, takes itself for its life-task, or dies of inanition and inertia. Here, too, it is true, to paraphrase Pascal, that he who chooses not, or postpones the choice, has also chosen. This initial " Either-Or " is characteristic of a philosophy which does not merely record and analyse life, but claims to be part of life and a factor in the work of redemption.

Eucken's exposition of the negative movement and the conversion from sense to spirit includes a singularly brilliant and satisfying ethico-religious defence of freedom, involving a reasoned justification of the religious categories of Grace and Salvation. The spiritual life is conceived as an activity which is both ours and God's—a redemptive process grounded in the intimate harmony between our human freedom and His saving initiative. Perhaps no part of Eucken's

work has more gravity and momentum, certainly none is richer in fertile suggestion than his conception of the spiritual life as at once creating and overcoming within itself all oppositions; so that freedom implies surrender, immanence transcendence, personality the Absolute. In his treatment of the redemptive interpenetration of the human and the Divine, Eucken verges on irrationalism. To take a well-known and characteristic passage from " The Truth of Religion " : " The origination of freedom out of grace, of a self-sustaining activity out of a condition of dependence, is a fundamental fact that defies all explanation. As the supreme condition of the spiritual life it has an axiomatic character." The final clause is undeniably true of that life which is so intimate with ours and so irrefutably sure to the inner experience, vindicating itself in a thousand wondrous ways in lives in which the human and Divine have touched and mingled. What could be more personally axiomatic than the power of this spiritual life, brooding over human frailty and energising it into redemptive action ? Thus far he escapes the charge of irrationalism ; it is when he denies reason an insight into revelation, as though personality functioned in detachments and reason alone of all human faculties were refused the baptism of grace and left outside the temple, that such a charge has a certain measure of justification. But probably this irrationalism is more apparent

than real, and can be traced to Eucken's persistent avoidance of terms which might lend themselves to an intellectualistic interpretation.

To sum up Eucken's doctrine of the negative movement, one cannot do better than quote the following admirable passage from Prof. Gibson's "Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy of Life" (p. 20):

> A negative movement from a self-centred, self-enslaved individuality to a God-centred personality, a movement from the sense-world to the self, and through the self inwardly to God, is at once the assertion and the salvation of our true selfhood. It is a defence of our personality against all naturalising and impersonalising tendencies, and, as such, it is the indispensable preliminary to our faith in the efficacy of our freedom. The defence of personality is the defence of freedom, and it is in the defence of personality, as we have said, that lies the true significance of the negative movement. The positive movement consists in the redemption of the world into sympathy and harmony with those spiritual ideals—ideals of art, morality and religion—apart from whose sustaining power our personality would shrink to a mere pendant of the mechanism of Nature. This redemptive process is grounded in the intimate harmony between our human freedom and the saving initiative and intention of God. In this fundamental conviction we have the union of morality and religion the claim of a religious basis for ethics, and the establishment of Eucken's philosophy as an ethico-religious philosophy of life.

Eucken's Philosophy as a Cosmic-Personal Religious Idealism

There is another approach to this transition from individual to person, by way of a more speculative conception: we can view it as a

Cosmic-Personal Idealism, merging at a certain point into a religious idealism. We begin again with the two life-centres. There is the natural life, that insulated little circle embedded in the great All, yet contracted upon itself, referring everything to its own petty, selfish interests and estimating everything according to the standards of pleasure and utility. There is also the spiritual life, which frees the individual from the slavery of his mean interests, cares nothing about the pleasant and useful, but everything about the good and true, and pursues its high ends regardless of the demands of the natural life, so that to enter it involves a stern negation of the immediately given. This life of the spirit, as we have already seen, can be interpreted neither in terms of mechanism nor in terms of logic; it is an independent spiritual reality which brings its own demands to the given and reconstitutes it according to its own standards. Thus, embracing and reshaping reality, it clearly cannot be derived from nature, for nothing can be transformed by a power having its fulcrum within that thing; the point of control must lie beyond it. Further, such a spiritual life implies ethical decision. For as it cannot be mechanically evolved or logically necessitated, it must be *freely willed*; and this stamps it as *personal* in character. And, further still, it is more than personal, it is *cosmic*, not merely a "self," but a world, for, as has been pointed out, it embraces the whole of reality, and

both inwardly apprehends and vitally reconstitutes it.

Moreover, while man is not only natural, but spiritual, and therefore capable of appropriating all the possibilities of the spiritual life, his immediate position is that of an enthralment to the life of sense, and Eucken knows as little as the New Testament of an immediate transition from nature to spirit. "Ye must be born again," is his stern cry also to a sluggish and unspiritual age. The spiritual approaches man with an austere and revolutionary demand; he must choose the unrealised and dimly perceived. And to make so heroic and passionate a choice demands the conviction that the thing chosen stands above the chooser's feeble and intermittent aspirations and energies. To choose a spiritual life which must be maintained in an unspiritual world of contradictions and tyrannies is only possible on the assumption that this life has its roots outside and beyond the world it seeks to reconstruct; in other words, that in choosing it we are linking ourselves on to the Ultimate Reality. It is at this point that the conception of the spiritual life merges into a conception of God, and the Cosmic-Personal into a Religious Idealism. We no longer carry the weight of a task we are unequal to; the task carries us, and, relieved from taking thought how to add cubits to our statures, we are free to grow. We can now work heartily and joyously for those ideals of the beautiful, the true and the good which

we now know to be supremely realised in God. This takes us into the realm of what Eucken calls "universal" religion. It has its parallel in the first flush of joyful security that accompanies a typical evangelical "conversion." The newly-awakened soul opens its eyes to the assuring smile of God. All inner cleavage, all isolation, all sense of contradiction in the universe is removed. The alien has become a compatriot in Zion, the stranger a citizen, the servant a son and heir. The poor man has become rich, for all things are his and he is God's. The soul is at home in God's world.

This is not the final reconciliation, however. Soon a new conflict arises. Instead of a triumphal march with an omnipotent God at the head, the spiritual pilgrimage becomes a slow, grim, contracted path, beset with stern barriers and malignant foes. Nature brutally ignores spiritual interests, and drives her chariot of destruction over the very Christ of God. In the world of men wrong triumphs, and unspiritual ends degrade spiritual powers. And within the soul there is an even darker and more turbulent world of antinomies. There the struggle for spiritual existence has its Armageddon, and the crisis is fierce and protracted; there the foe is most treacherous and victory least secure. "Just when we're safest" passion snatches the reins from our inexpectant hands, and the bitterness of impure motives surges up in the cup of sacrifice. If moral and

spiritual achievement were all, there could be no escape from the humiliation and despair of failure. But at this point a new realm of inwardness beyond mere achievement and a new spiritual immediacy are opened to the soul—a spiritual life of supremely personal character, and therefore of the highest validity, though it may not find adequate expression in "deeds." We pass from action in the conventional sense, from achievement and accomplishment, to personality, character, love, disposition and intention; and these have no genuine validity except when they originate in the intimacies of our life with God's; otherwise they are merely the subjective moods of the grandiose and inflated ego. In this direct, personal, inward relation to the Absolute life we pass from "doing" to "becoming" what we aspire to, and from the mere recognition of a standard which values and judges to communion with a personal Omnipresence that inspires and redeems. With this we have passed from "universal" to "characteristic" religion, which latter stands for the triumphant preservation of spiritual life in sharpest contradiction to the world, for the transcending of sorrow not by evading, but by acknowledging and transmuting it, for all the great Pauline antinomies of glory through shame, joy through sorrow, life through death. Eucken makes no attempt at a systematic proof of that Supreme Life whose penetrating presence is the source of our victory. To "prove" it one would

need to find a higher tribunal than itself and surely there can be none ; its proof is practical : the unflagging stream of creative energy and spiritual insight that flows through the soul that is the City of God. Such personal certainty is axiomatic, and it is realisation, not explanation, that comes to the relief of doubt—the heroic and unreserved response of our life to the regenerating action of the Divine life upon us. It is here that Eucken approximates most closely to the heart of Christianity, and perhaps the greatest unconscious compliment ever paid to this great thinker was the *dictum* of a poor Methodist woman, who, on hearing his ideas explained in popular speech, said, " But I know that already ; I learnt it all at class meeting."

Eucken's Philosophy as an Activism

We now come to consider Eucken's personalistic philosophy as an Activism. The term first appears in " Life's Basis and Life's Ideal," and its adoption in lieu of the wider term " religious Idealism " is indicative of a definite policy evoked by the revival in Germany of a pantheistic romanticism whose religious affinities are with the mystics. But an activistic position is indicated already in his earlier work—*e.g.*, in " The Unity of the Spiritual Life," where he emphasises the self-consciousness of the personality as self-activity directed upon a world, not self-introspection and self-intuition. Action is the true spiritual " fact,"

the vital synthesis in which the opposition between subject and object is transcended by the realisation of the redeeming Omnipresence, and so exclusive an insistence upon action precludes any just valuation of the mystical elements of the spiritual life. In " Life's Basis and Life's Ideal " Eucken compares Activism with two modern philosophical tendencies—Pragmatism and Contemplative Æstheticism. Its affinity with Pragmatism is that it also sees the key to truth not in intellectual enquiry, but in action. Its opposition to Pragmatism is its insistence upon the independent character of reality over against our experience of it. We do not bend it to our human needs and conditions ; it bends us to its standards and valuations. Against Æsthetic Individualism he contends that " we are not born into a world that needs only to be translated, as it were, into the language of immediacy and enjoyment, but must first seek and win it for ourselves through a radical displacement of our life-centre." For a clear, well-balanced summary of Eucken's formulation of Activism as we have it in " Life's Basis and Life's Ideal," and, indirectly, in the brief " Main Problems," I turn once more to Prof. Gibson's book (pp. 174-5, 178):—

Spirit and personality are *problems* to be solved by being realised through action that responds to an inward call to unity. In our ordinary human experience the powers that make for dissolution and death are closely co-active with the powers that make for concen-

tration and for life. But it is hopeless from the level of the given to attempt any mutual adjustment of these opposing powers, for the standpoint from which to control the adjustment must lie beyond the given. Archimedes cannot move the world, except from a fulcrum outside it. Our only course is to avail ourselves of the demands made upon us by the very creations of our own human activity, by Science, Art, Society, and, in the light of these, win our way slowly forwards and inwards beyond the given, towards the still undiscovered centre of our spiritual life. Each step in the way must be taken through some form of spiritual work—of work, that is, which, in the name of an ideal of beauty, truth, or right, helps to produce and realise the very life that inspires it. Thereby we build up for ourselves that new immediacy which can alone secure us the rest and confidence our nature so deeply craves. Indeed, the very process through which our personality grows towards its own unity, brings about it the protecting presence of that Absolute Life which we can realise only as we realise ourselves. The fixity to which our lives aspire grows upon us through the very stress of the work to which we resolutely commit the welfare of our souls. The immediacies of the spirit come thus to displace the immediacies of sense and inclination, causing these to sink back to a subordinate and phenomenal level. . . .

No truth can be complete which is not *my* truth—*i.e.*, at once a truth for me and a truth won through my own activity, nor can truth have any real compelling power except in so far as it has been won against resistance, and comes to us as the reconciling of some opposition that has been vitally felt and earnestly met. We might even say, in relation to the problems of the life process, that it is our activities themselves which are false or true. In so far as they raise us to the immediacies of the spiritual world that is still in the making, and so confirm and organise our spiritual unity, we may characterise them as true. Truth is the native endeavour of our life to realise its own high destiny.

The essential truth-problem is how to find Reality, the test of the truth of an activity being its power to unify the life and overcome the oppositions which arise so profusely within it. When the nature of Truth is so conceived, the old opposition between Truth and Freedom ceases to trouble us. For the essential Truth can be won only through the freedom of the spiritual life. Truth is no longer some achieved expression of Reality to which our free life, despite all its immanent drawings in a contrary direction, must unconditionally submit. The Truth is as unachieved as is our freedom or our spiritual destiny, and it is in the further achieving of it that we realise our freedom.

Eucken's Activism more than any aspect of his philosophy has been eagerly seized upon by Christian teachers as a philosophical vindication of religious categories. But while this Activism affords many a *point d'appui* for the theologian, and leaves room for such a doctrine as that of Justification by Faith, where man's greatest moral act is a response to God's highest possibility, and for a supreme focal act of God such as the act of Christ on the Cross, Eucken himself does not acknowledge these dogmatic implications, and, taking his work as a whole, there are as many elements in it that militate against such implications as elements that support them. Eucken's relation to dogmatic Christianity will be dealt with in the next chapter; here it is sufficient to name certain important affinities between his Activism and the Christian doctrine of Grace and Redemption, for that Activism will prove an aid in the replacement not only of a superseded orthodoxy,

but of an outlived liberalism by a theology at once modern and positive, is undoubtedly true.

Activism gives us a world which demands from us not portrayal or interpretation, but realisation and achievement through heroic spiritual activity. It makes will, energy, moral verve and virility central to self-realisation. It, therefore, implies a God not one whit more anæmic, æsthetic, romantic, speculatively intellectual, or theosophically mystical than the personalities who trace their spiritual existence to His inspiration and grace. It implies a God who is definable in terms of spiritual energy and ethical vitality, and it leaves room, as has been said, for the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It postulates a spiritual world which does not merely envelop and absorb us, but which acts upon us and transforms us. It makes a complete, moral, personal act determinative of a personal relation to ultimate reality. Theology steps in at this point and asks, "What is man's supreme moral act? What is central in man's relation to God? What is the action of God upon man, and how is it focussed and centralised?" Activism gives a partial answer, leaves room for some elements of the specifically Christian solution, and adumbrates the denial of others.

Eucken's Philosophy of History: the Living Past

One of the first concerns of a truly moral personality is to determine its relation to the past.

The past, together with that retroactive urgency of the future we call our ideals, is the stuff that the present is made of. To the "man in the street" who happens to be also a student of history, be it the history of his own soul or of the world, the past is either a tyranny or an inspiration, more often a tyranny. Remembrance of personal failure leaves not only a sting and a scar, but a deadly paralysis, a cowardice that poisons the springs of action. The past of the race, the nation, the Church, is also in modern times felt more often as a burden and an incubus, rather than as a source of present action and development. Tradition has laid its dead hand upon the young idea; the heirloom of a stereotyped convention paralyses creative effort. The number of those who find peace in submitting to the authority of tradition and in working out their own salvation within its pale is steadily decreasing. On the other hand, the crude revolt against the tyranny of the past, which, silkworm-like, thought to evolve the web of the present out of its own substance, cut out of its context in time, has outlived itself. No affectation or delusion of fresh, independent life can galvanise the severed member into anything more than nervous reflex action, and the pose becomes first grotesque and then spectral. Escape from the dark vault of the past and the numbing touch of the dead hand does not lie that way; even if the action of the dead upon us could be safely ignored, yet

we cannot waive our right and neglect our duty of retrospective action upon them without vital loss.

And it would seem that it is given to our young century to discover and realise for itself the plasticity of a past which we once saw menacing and rigid as destiny. It was indeed at the beginning of the century that Maeterlinck [1] wrote the essay which will long remain the classic expression of this new vision. "The force of the past," says Maeterlinck, "is indeed one of the heaviest that weigh upon men. . . . And yet there is none more docile, more eager to follow the direction we could so readily give, did we but know how best to avail ourselves of this docility. . . . In reality it is alive; and indeed, for many of us, endowed with a profounder, more ardent life than either present or future. In reality this dead city is often the hot-bed of our existence, and in accordance with the spirit in which men return to it shall some find all their wealth there, and others lose what they have. . . . The conquerors in this world, . . . these know instinctively that what appears to exist no longer is still existing intact, that what appeared to be ended is only completing itself. They know that the years time has taken from them are still in travail; still, under their new master, obeying the old. They know that their past is for ever in movement. . . . That

[1] "The Past," in his volume "The Buried Temple."

however remote or vast the shadow may be that stretches behind them, they have only to put forth a gesture of gladness or hope for the shadow at once to copy this gesture, and, flashing it back . . . extract unexpected treasure from all this wreckage. . . . They know that they have retrospective action on all bygone deeds ; and that the dead themselves will annul their verdicts in order to judge afresh a past that to-day has transfigured and endowed with new life."

Following upon a philosophical age which imagined itself freed from all historical connections, the nineteenth century was characterised by an unprecedented development of the historic sense. It saw everything from the historical point of view —understanding history as a consecutive chain of " becoming," a continuous stream of successive phases of development. Everything was threaded on to the historical string, and even the life of the spirit tended to become a mere " historical category." On the one hand, such a view freed us from the old conception which attached the working of eternal truth exclusively to one definite point in history, from whence it flowed through time ; on the other, it turned eternal truth into ephemeral opinion, for in a continuous stream of becoming truth attenuates to a fleeting impression, and reality is reduced to a realm of shadows. And, moreover, if history is conceived as a logical and organic development which needs only to be understood in its reasonableness, its

inevitable and unbroken succession, then we are betrayed into that very slavery to the past which our predecessors tried vainly but nobly to escape. We become passive recipients, "train-bearers of alien ages"; we do not get beyond the laborious and pedestrian art of re-living a life that is external to us.

To this enervating and sapping attitude towards the past Eucken opposes a view of history by which the past, whether of the individual or of the race, becomes a theatre for the achievement of that task of self-realisation which is the characteristic of free personality. But this involves a distinction between two elements in history. There is an unbroken stream of mere "happenings"—the rise and fall of peoples, the succession of lights that fail and lives that fall dead. There is also—focussed in the great pioneers and epoch-makers—something that distinguishes itself from that stream, and pulls against it; something in time yet not of time; something creative and militant that presupposes a kingdom of eternal truth behind and in history, giving it meaning and value. Thus we get a spiritual history—the struggle of the ages to realise the eternal order. Viewed from this standpoint the ages do not rise one out of the other in calm, unbroken sequence or organic growth. The spiritual life which accompanies them must sink into decadence, unless it is renewed and created by each successive age for itself. And while

each age must ultimately seek affiliation with all that is great and good in the past, and take its place as a link in the chain, it must also, and first of all, assert its independence over against the past, and win its own spiritual life in opposition and contrast to what has gone before. Thus our life is at once a struggle against, and a continuation of, the past.

This attitude towards history is most convincingly and brilliantly applied in " The Problem of Human Life," one of the most important of Eucken's books, and perhaps the most popular with English readers. To follow his account of the great thinkers of the world is to be initiated into a spiritual philosophy of history that transforms the world for us. An examination of Eucken's historical method is outside the scope of this book, but a few remarks on what he holds should be our attitude towards these great ones of the past may supplement our consideration of his conception of history.

The first condition is independence. Only between free souls can there be true friendship, and the sacrifice of independence does as little honour to the master as to the disciple. That such independence is not incompatible with, but rather founded on, reverence need hardly be emphasised. When we thus approach the great minds we do not merely receive instruction, but reach to the fontal energies that have moulded their thought. Our reverent wonder turns their

findings into problems, their answers into new questions ; our spiritual independence applies the creative energy we come in contact with to the problems of our own time. We are not only disciples, but co-workers with the great thinkers. And our relation to them is not merely one of subjective admiration or enthusiastic warmth ; it is rather the contact with a power that frees us from the narrowness of the ego and the moment, and attunes us to a timeless spiritual present "which has the steadfastness and organised variety of a world."

Such a view of the philosophy of history is of the most vital interest for Christian thought. Once its validity is grasped, all such attempts at mechanical "restorations" of Christianity in such returns to the primitive as the crude conceptions of pietism or the impassioned gospel of a Tolstoy are shown to be puerile and impossible. To attempt to reproduce the past is to fall from worship to idolatry, and to lose one's spiritual birthright. And must we not include in this category—though we cannot claim Eucken for such a view—that return to the Jesus of the Gospels, and that more recent return to the Jesus behind the Gospels, to which so much of the finest critical scholarship and spiritual insight have been devoted of late? This inclusion could justifiably be made whenever such a return is narrowly conceived in opposition to the Christ of the Church's collective experience and consciousness,

and not merely as fundamental to a valuation and appropriation of such experience, in which latter case it is, of course, not only legitimate but essential.

Again, this conception of history is important for our attitude towards historical dogmatic Christianity in helping us to realise that even our most completely justified revolt against traditional dogma must be something more positive and appropriative than mere revolt, if it is not to be an intellectual pose or a childish mood. We must approach the old crystallisations of conviction not only with the sympathetic understanding of their historical importance—nineteenth century " historicism " gave us that—but with a humble and reverent understanding of their importance for us who share the spiritual life that gave birth to them, and recognise beneath the surface of contemporary limitation elements of eternal validity by which we live. Only then can our dogmatic past cease to be either an incubus or a dead heirloom when we make it both a minister and a source of our life.

But this view of the past as an eternal spiritual present has a still deeper significance when we apply it to the individual soul, after the manner of Maeterlinck, and view it in relation to the sins and failures which make the past such an unspeakable burden upon the anguished hearts of men. The soul, too, has a history : this is indeed the eternal value of man that he can have a history and give

it continuity. As long as his history, his past, is a destiny to him—a series of unmalleable happenings, a grim necessity in which he is enchained—he lives in a vault of death and has not yet begun to be a personality. But once he awakes to the fact that by the retroactive force of moral personality he can translate the events of the past from necessity into freedom, control for good happenings over which he had once no control, transmute past evil by the very moral reaction it has produced in him, lay the ghosts of conscience by the moral self-judgment whose severity justifies, he enters upon that triumphant spiritual life which does not only grasp a new world, but reconstitutes the old by its power. And further, it is here that grace, forgiveness, salvation, justification by faith may be brought within the grasp of our minds as well as of our hearts. For if our present insight can penetrate and mould the past, if our self-judgment and bitter revulsion from evil can save the past and transfigure the blackest crime, what of the saving insight of God the Holy, whose thought is so intimate with us that it pierces the mind of man to kill and to make alive ? If we are not to be left in that irrationalism which denies the right of philosophy to deal with historical fact, and leaves the intellect outside the redeeming act of God, we must make some attempt at a philosophical realisation of grace and forgiveness, and we may find our starting point here.

The Socialised Personality and the Cult of the Superman

We are not yet fully developed personalities; we are persons in the making, slowly moulded by social and Divine relations. And of all the enemies we encounter on our pilgrim's progress towards personality none is more insidious than that æsthetic form of individualism which, while rooted in a naturalistic conviction, speaks the language of idealism. Moreover, it has real affinities with the quest of ideal personality in its passionate protest against the cult of the industrial machine, and the dehumanising character of a materialistic culture, as well as in its aspiration towards freedom and self-expression. This type of individualism is closely associated with the name of Nietzsche, who is made responsible for all the brutal self-assertion and nauseous arrogance which some of his disciples have written and practised into a vicious popularity in the master's name. In England especially, Mr. Wells's super-mannikins, prancing victoriously through the literature of the half-cultured, have prejudiced the nobler public against a thinker who, in spite of lamentable aberrations and a certain intellectual rather than moral *défaillance,* has voiced the legitimate demands of the "enjoying" soul in a way worth our closest attention. Eucken does full justice to the sensitive, feminine temperament and aristocratic soul of Nietzsche, and recognises

to the full the many valuable moral and religious suggestions that stud his pages. But he also opposes him most trenchantly as the representative of an emotional subjectivism that fails in achieving its distinctive end, the attainment of an inward self-sufficiency; for the cult of sensibility can never yield that inner world which alone is the root and source of self-sufficiency. For Eucken personality is created and moulded by social influences, and finds itself only as it takes its place and renders service in the social movements which surround it. The æsthetic egoist, who not only shirks, but defies and mocks, those social duties and sympathies which alone go to the shaping of personality, sinks into a soulless isolation which is insanity, though the brain remain as sharp as a two-edged sword. To escape this inevitable Nemesis the devotees of æsthetic individualism tend more and more to form esoteric cults. Here again, in so far as this is a genuine revolt against mediocrity, the movement has affinities with a true philosophy of life. But instead of seeking to combat the mediocre in the individual in the interests of the heroic, their battle is with a supposedly common-place and philistine world. To segregate the elect, the *Schone Seelen*, from the common herd is the height of their ambition, and the result is a coterie of hysterically "unconventional" neuropaths, whose insatiable appetite for the exotic and esoteric is commensurate with their dullness to all large interests, political, social

and religious. And in the end the pendulum often swings back, and a fat and sensual culture claims them for its own.

It is not merely in the strong repudiation of the illegitimate demands and bastard ideals of emotional subjectivism, however, that Eucken's critique of this tendency is peculiarly valuable at the present day, when the cult is encroaching upon British society. He also meets its legitimate demands by a conception of religion which fulfils the righteous aspirations of the enjoying soul in revolt against a religion which appears to it as "a subterranean conspiracy against life." To the Nietzschean distortion of Christianity, which is nothing more than a degenerate and wilted Buddhism, and to the present form of Christianity with its too passive and negative attitude towards life, he opposes a Christianity of joyousness and action—a Christianity which is not merely a therapeutic agent in the cure of human frailty, but the source of a life of triumphant vigour and abounding zest. To the untutored greed of life and the colossal egoism of the superman, he opposes a divine call to self-realisation, through self-diremption and self-return, the dialectic being, of course, one of freedom and not of logic.

It need hardly be pointed out that all this has a cogent bearing upon the religious individualism which has been the plague of Protestant Christendom since the Reformation. Our public ethic is

so crude and un-Christian, not because a world with its back to Christ is defeating the endeavours of the Christian social conscience among us, but because of the parochial preoccupations of a Church sapped by private pieties, congregational busy-ness, dilettante theosophies, romantic philanthropies. Much has been said about the intimate connection between a deep sense of the "cruciality of the Cross" and a large public ethic; but it must not be the Cross without the Kingdom, nor the Kingdom without the Christ in whom it is ours. And, if the Church is to be saved, it must turn from the quietist and romantic conception of religion as an ambulance, or as a delicate and esoteric culture for chastened minds, to the Gospel of an abounding life, the secret of the true *joie de vivre*. Compare the triumphantly joyous atmosphere breathing through such a book as Maxim Gorky's "Comrades," with the stale, *triste* air of our conventional religious life. In this book we have the record of a people living beneath the shadow of oppression, imprisonment, torture and death, yet overflowing with an enthusiasm, a warmth of fellowship, a sense of glory, a deep and thrilling joy, which is more akin to the genius of the New Testament than the life of many of our Churches. The Church of to-day hardly knows what rejoicing in the Holy Spirit, or in any other spirit for that matter, means. And until we recapture the glowing gladness of Christ's world, with its clouds drenched in golden glory and the

flower of joy bursting from the very rifts of the bruised reed, we can never hope to win those enjoying souls who belong to the world's *grande race.*

We have traced in a popular way the fundamental elements of Eucken's philosophy of life, omitting many interesting aspects of a more purely technical nature. Eucken's theory of knowledge, which is of supreme importance for a more thorough appreciation of his work, and which has hitherto only come to us in an unfinished form, apparently tending towards irrationalism, is likely to be given us shortly in its final form, and is therefore not touched upon here. His defective valuation of mysticism will be touched upon in the next chapter, but its complete discussion would require a detailed consideration of his truth-standard and his negative attitude towards psychology. There are also certain lines of development and change of emphasis in Eucken's philosophy, such as the preponderance of the absolutist over the humanist aspect in his later work, which cannot he entered upon here. Nor is this the place for showing how his reaction against intellectualism has led to an undervaluation of the power of a well-grasped concept, and so introduced a chasm into that conception of the spiritual life in which mind and will function as a unity. It must be noted, however, that this does not mean that Eucken founds his philosophy on "faith" or "feeling"—on the contrary, he

insists upon a speculative basis—but only that his philosophical courage does not extend to an adventure of the reason, as well as of the will, upon those ultimate sources of the spiritual life which no intellectualist recognises more clearly than he. A certain distrust both of the power of a concept over the mind and of the power of the spiritual reason to delve in the mystical foundations of the spiritual life puts a flaw upon the very "freedom-philosophy" which is his strength and glory. Viewed as an ethico-religious treatment of the problem of free will, his defence of freedom is, to quote Professor Boyce Gibson, "the most radical in its criticism, the most stable and satisfying in its reconstruction"; viewed as a statement of personal freedom it is slightly vitiated by the two negative tendencies mentioned above, and by his persistent refusal to address himself to a psychological theory of self-consciousness. But these slight strictures are put forward with the greatest possible tentativeness, for a final valuation of Eucken's philosophy will not be possible until we are in possession of his complete theory of knowledge.

Eucken comes to the British mind at a time when its old sturdy and *naïve* commonsense philosophy and religious certitude have been badly shaken by a half assimilated mish-mash of modern philosophemes. At the mercy of its uncoordinated perceptions and impressions, it has become somewhat like a child's garden, in which many

seeds are sown but nothing very much ever comes up. To such a temper Eucken's philosophy brings that pragmatic and actualistic quality which a shrewd and reality-loving people demands, and that stability and depth of speculative groundwork which its thin and restless impressionism needs. To him a philosophy of life does not mean a philosophy which follows life and explains it, but a philosophy which is part of life and a method of redemption. Thus the problems of freedom and personality are not logical conundrums to be solved by wrangling "Gelehrte" from behind their respective "Pults" (desks), but life-issues to be fought and striven for in a Holy War. Not the intellect, sitting in large leisure in its walled house, but the spirit, rising up in wrath against a natural order which denies its autonomy and pours contempt upon its aspirations, is the philosopher in the university of life. His philosophy is the history of the soul putting the inward whisper of its independence and divinity to the supreme test in defying the principalities and powers that would brutalise it. Life is not a debating society for him; it is a battle-field, where rival powers are striving in a gigantic combat for the soul of man. His interest in the relief of Mansoul can only be described by the much-abused word "evangelical." "The emergence into new life of the humblest soul," he once said to the present writer, in tones of deep and enthusiastic conviction, "is more to me than the birth and

discovery of a thousand new worlds." But while gloriously free from the intellectualist microbe, and from the narrowing disabilities of the muck-raking "Gelehrter ("we suffer from erudition," is a characteristic *mot* of his), his life-philosophy is as far removed from the hysterical effusions of the pseudo-mystic and hedonist as from the coarse-grained, obtuse realism of the street-corner pragmatist. Bringing to his problem not only the passion of a pure and youthful soul and a boldly experimental nature, but also a severely trained intellect, a deeply informed philosophical spirit, and a power of wide-glancing appreciation and penetrative insight, his work can take its place beside the maturest and noblest philosophies intellectualism has given us, and must rank as path-breaking both for the perplexed public mind and for the aristocracy of thinkers. If, on the one hand, it lies so close to the great universal facts of life that humble folk will see in it nothing new, but merely a re-statement of the teaching of Jesus, students will find in this philosophical restatement of Christ's teaching unflagging sources of inspirational and creative thought for their own work. To Christian thought especially his luminous and weighty critique of the present form of Christianity will come with salutary force, not so much as a call to discard the old, but rather as a reminder that in every age the Church which identifies the Gospel with its own appropriation of it has already lost it.

III

Rudolf Eucken and Historical Christianity

CHAPTER III

Rudolf Eucken and Historical Christianity

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CHAPTER III

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EUCKEN stands before us to-day as perhaps the greatest thinker of our age and the protagonist of a new idealism which satisfies our demand for moral reality as no idealistic philosophy has ever done, and as the teacher who has most fully and boldly developed the religious implications of ethical idealism. His philosophy of life is an insistence upon the supremacy of the spiritual. His defence of freedom is a doctrine of spiritual liberty rooted in the saving initiative of God and our dependence on Him. His vindication of personality is the rescue of the free, God-centred personality from the thraldom of a self-centred individuality. His Activism stands not only for the kingdom of God in the making to be progressively realised through our action, but also for that complete renewal of the given without which such realisation is impossible. Again and again we find in his pages an enthusiastic pre-occupation with specifically Christian categories which rebukes the fashionable reluctance of certain

Christian teachers whose apologetic timidity tempts them to speak the language of Grace with the accent of Evolution, and to make of the soul's supreme experience a mere tag of theology in their anxiety to conciliate the half-cultured. Again and again we are carried away by Eucken's enthusiastic valuation of Christian elements, his unreserved adherence to the principle of redemption, his reverent and noble tribute to the uniqueness of Jesus for the spiritual life. One need not go to the three volumes which enshrine his specific philosophy of religion—the "Main Problems," "The Truth of Religion," and "Can we still be Christians?"—to realise his deep affinities with the central spirit of Christianity; scattered throughout his work are abundant and revealing glimpses of the Christian soul that animates the body of his philosophy. It could not well be otherwise. While the artificial limitations of an intellectualist system may exclude religion, a philosophy of life must always in some sense be a philosophy of faith. In Eucken the religious implications of such a philosophy are acknowledged from the first. To play on the titles of two of his books, "the struggle for a concrete spiritual experience" implies "the truth of religion" as its only explanation. Further still, such religion must be a religion of redemption in the Christian, as distinct from the Buddhist, sense; for, as we have seen, there can ultimately be no genuine struggle or negative movement

unless the oppositions of life are overcome, not intellectually through a clearer understanding, but actively through an experience of salvation—"a redeeming and renewing spiritual activity which is a salvation straight from God."

Eucken is coming to be more and more generally regarded as the teacher, who, by virtue of his speculative endowment, sympathetic insight and spiritual passion, is destined to play a leading part in commending Christianity to the modern mind—blazing a trail to God across the tangled wild of fermenting counter-tendencies for the baffled spirit that can find refuge neither in traditional orthodoxy nor in our soulless rationalistic culture. He has a unique knowledge both of the complex and involved problems of modern culture and of the central questions of religion and life. His knowledge of theology, especially of the development of dogma, is sound, and his attitude towards it entirely respectful. He combines a thoroughly modern sense of things with complete freedom from slavery to the intellectual fashion of the hour. His comprehensive historical scholarship has given a wide sanity and generosity to his judgment, without putting the drag of a timid caution upon his thought. No wonder a whole generation of young thinkers looks to him as a path-breaker for the religion of the future.

Added to this, the positively Christian mind finds in him an appreciation of Christianity which

has nothing in common with the patronising attitude of the old rationalism. And this appreciation does not stop short at the point where Christianity lifts a challenging head above the general stream of spiritual life and God-ward aspiration. Eucken has the most vital affinity with those aspects of Christianity which for the orthodox theologian centre in the Cross of Christ. He recognises, as few modern thinkers do, the reality and gravity of the problem of Divine love and justice which lies behind all theories of the Atonement. Sin—not merely the blind and pathetic blundering of lost children, but the deliberate and malignant wickedness of rebels against the moral order—is to him a reality which has bitten too deeply into his consciousness to allow him for one moment to deride or caricature the conception of a crucified Redeemer. Whatever his rejections and denials may be, they are not the flat rationalisations of a mind alien to the genius of the thing it superciliously toys with, but they proceed from the very profundity of a religious experience which is passionately jealous to keep the sources of its life pure and open for other souls.

The book which embodies his philosophy of religion in its most complete form is the excellently translated "Truth of Religion." The somewhat involved and reiterative style in which it is written tends to obscure its strength and originality, just as an excessively concrete and limpid style often

hides the difficulty and depth of the subject, and with still more fatal result. It must not be forgotten that Eucken, like Fichte, is essentially a prophet, and reiteration belongs to the genius of the prophet, and may be regarded as his limitation or his virtue according to one's point of view. The lecturer can afford to choose and prune his words with an eye to the greatest possible effectiveness; the prophet, in the grip of an inspiration and a passion, often dare not stop to work at verbal craftsmanship. Even Eucken's most deliberate and speculative work is carried and stressed by an inspiration and a passion, and the peculiar abstractness and involutions of the Teutonic style do not make for clearness and vividness under such pressure.

In "The Truth of Religion" we have the problem presented on broad and speculative lines; it is rather in his latest book, "Can we still be Christians?" that Eucken's attitude towards historical and dogmatic Christianity finds its concentrated and characteristic expression, and it is therefore on this last that we shall attempt to found our estimate of his position. This does not, of course, imply that the larger work is not essential to a right understanding of Eucken's theological views; on the contrary, it is fundamental to such an understanding, and, indeed, includes the contents of the much smaller and far more popular volume in its range. One's sole reason for choosing the latter is the more

concrete and challenging form in which it presents the issue.

Turning first, and somewhat briefly, to "The Truth of Religion," we see in it all the fundamentals of Eucken's philosophy of life, recapitulated in relation to the main issue. In common with other prominent thinkers, he conceives religion as rooted not in belief, but in life. Man's discontent with the "here and now" world urges him into a struggle for a concrete spiritual experience—"a quest for a More which lies on a coast beyond the natural province," and a hopeless quest, if that "More" be sought within the circle of the purely human. In religion, however, man finds that attachment to an over-world beyond himself which makes for inward elevation and renewal. As we have seen, Eucken distinguishes between two types of religion—the universal and the characteristic. Viewed briefly from the standpoint of the above definition, universal religion is religion as spirituality: a new mood, not a new world. "We have in a spiritual life a new stage *within* the world; but we have not yet *a new world*; we have won no over-world as yet." Or, to put it from a different angle, universal religion has no personal God; it has only a diffused and pervasive spiritual life, which, ever at war with the natural, conquers only its outworks, not its citadel, because pitted against a world which it cannot finally subdue for lack of a point of vantage above it. Characteristic

religion rises from a diffused and militant spiritual life to a personal Omnipresence in whom that life is supremely real, and who penetrates the spirit of man with converting and redeeming effect, translating it into an inward kingdom. Thus we proceed from the colourless conception of deity to that of a living and personal God, whose chief attribute is self-communicating and redeeming love. And it should be noted that though the relation of the human spirit to God is conceived as an inward immediacy, Eucken, in sharp contrast to some of his school, insists on the supreme importance of an organised Church. He demands a Christian *κοινωνία*, a holy assembly, and recognises that if such an assembly is not to sink to the level of a debating society, it must demand certain fundamental convictions from its leaders and teachers. While his critique of the existing Churches does not err on the side of leniency, he recognises their invaluable service as rallying points and ministrants of the spiritual life.

The final section is devoted to a powerful vindication of the eternal element in historic Christianity. For Eucken Christianity is not one religion among others, but the religion of religions, the most perfect embodiment of the absolute religion. It offers us the completest initiation into the realities of the spiritual life. It was "the first to bring the pure inwardness of the soul to a clearer expression, but it has also, through the linking of the human to a Divine and

Eternal order, raised life beyond all the petty human." Meeting the dark problems of life crucially and actively at their central depths, it does not stop short at deliverance from evil, but translates men into a new world in which the supremacy of God implies and demands the free, self-contained activity of the God-penetrated personality. It has, in short, created a new type of life, poured a new strength and heroism into mankind, initiated a new movement in the soul, giving a history and a value to the poorest and simplest. Viewing the traditional dogmatic form of Christianity as superseded and out of consonance with the legitimate ideals and thought of the age, he pleads for a liberalism which, while discarding outworn dogma, will delve all the deeper into the divine and eternal substance of Christianity, and, while demanding a re-statement germane to the demands of the time, will wage war against its superficial, relaxed and unspiritual temper. Throughout his critique of the present form of Christianity, Eucken works not in the interests of a lazy and shallow rationalism, but for a living faith.

Postponing the examination of Eucken's dogmatic rejections, which can be discussed more conveniently in connection with his latest book, we notice one significant omission in " The Truth of Religion." In vain do we search it for a philosophical interpretation of prayer, adoration, contemplation, ecstasy or worship; throughout

the whole of his work, indeed, there is a taciturnity about these spiritual intimacies which verges on suspicion of them. Philosophically this lacuna may be explained, as has been hinted before, by his characteristic distrust of psychology (largely due, no doubt, to the physiological laboratory psychology so much in vogue in Germany and so brutally naturalistic in its general trend), to his equally comprehensible revulsion from intellectualism, and to his predominantly activistic point of view. He barely admits that behind the action or " work " in which we express our union with God there is a personal spiritual experience—a central attitude of the soul inly at one with itself and in communion with God, and that this relation is a fundamental and controlling factor in the self-realisation of the personality through action. But one suspects that the fundamental reason for this omission is not to be sought in certain philosophical characteristics, but rather in an approach to the whole problem of religion which, in spite of the vitalistic philosophy that animates it, is speculative rather than experimental. (The same stricture applies to Eucken's treatment of Christology, as I hope to show further on.)

Confining ourselves to prayer, there is no more universal characteristic of the religious life of the race than the spontaneity and urgency with which it rises from the most widely divergent and intellectually antipodean natures, and the stability

and strength of soul derived from this form of communion with the Unseen by men of every type and temperament. To dismiss the universality of the prayer-instinct as the survival of ancestral superstition and a crude conception of the Deity is quite inadequate, however much this cause may contribute to it. Even the selfish and superstitious prayer of the man of sensual mind and evil life in hours of danger or calamity cannot be thus dismissed, for if ancestral superstition resurges at such times, it is also true that such crises reveal the naked soul as nothing else can. It is open to the superficial observer to say that such prayer is but the hysterical mood of a coward soul whose every-day life is its real "habit"; but is it not truer to say that the lightning flash of disaster across the dark waste of such a soul reveals its most central and truly "natural" bent—the sense of dependence upon God and the craving to have speech with Him? Again, the power and heroism of soul with which the habit of prayer invests even broken, ungifted and mediocre natures is a fact which must be taken into the most serious consideration by a philosophy of life. In a fine and penetrative chapter on Prayer, Dr. Eleanor Harris Rowland pleads convincingly for a more experimental standpoint. We need great Pray-ers, she urges, and such will always be marked personalities with a certain force and efficiency of character that owe little to natural endowment. "I have known people," she says,

" who were raised from commonplaceness by apparently no other characteristic than this. They were not gifted, they were not subtle, they were not noted for their mental capacity, but there emanated from them a certain force which is conspicuously lacking in many more intellectual men." And these words of a Christian apologist are echoed by many who stand completely outside religion. Nothing is deeper in the spirit of man, however far it may have wandered from its centre, than the conviction that the mysterious and profound life which lives behind the brain, lives by prayer, and that in entering the world of prayer we enter the world of reality. These are fundamental facts of our religious nature which challenge philosophy. No satisfactory *rationale* of prayer has ever been given, yet the most fumbling attempt is surely better than to drop it out of our analysis of the spiritual life. Even the ideal of contemplative monasticism deserves no such relegation to spiritual pusillanimity and decrepitude as Eucken and his school are inclined to mete out to it. Behind it there lies the deathless conviction that prayer is the most heroic act of the soul, just as the word, the look, the touch, by which love declares and commits itself may be not only a greater agony, a bloodier passion, but a more intensely moral *act* than the whole life of sacrifice and service that flows out of it. There is such a thing as elect souls, here and there, being called apart from the life of action and inter-

course to a life of prayer and contemplation as surely vicarious and altruistic as a life of philanthropy; for these are they who can say, "For their sakes I sanctify myself." It is only when such a vocation is conventionalised into monastic orders that it becomes morbid and mischievous. At any rate, the tacit passing-by of spiritual activities which through all the religious history of man have been the clearest expression of his spiritual life vitiates the claim of an otherwise noble and comprehensive treatment to be a complete philosophy of religion. The root of this neglect of the individual immediacy of the soul in communion with God may be traced to Eucken's fundamental view which connects, and all but identifies, religion with the spiritual life in its universal sense. For Eucken, religion does not begin in the individual's awakening to contact with a God conceived as a personal Saviour of the individual life, but in the individual's becoming conscious of the absolute spiritual life and identifying himself with it. Indeed, one is not sure that Eucken would not describe the Gospel type of individual realisation and intimacy as belonging to that circle of the "pettily human" which the individual must leave behind in order to become a personality. This aspect of Eucken's position may be supplemented by a personal utterance made to the present writer, in the course of an interview published in the *Australian Christian World*, July 21, 1911:—

The first step towards the spiritual life is, generally speaking, the realisation of a universal life all-inclusive and higher than the life of the individual or the group ; in other words, the dawning of a cosmic consciousness. But this, in itself, does not assure spiritual victory and inward reconciliation ; on the contrary, it introduces fresh elements of conflict. It still leaves man a passive subject, a mere spectator, a pawn in the game. The question that presses against his soul is, " Does this great Whole—this stream of which I am a passive tributary—concern itself about me ? " It is only when the man realises this unity, this " All," as penetrating human life to its depths of sorrow, pain and guilt ; when he experiences it not only as doing something "to" him, but as working "in" him, that he can rise above contradiction and conflict. From the moment in which he becomes an active agent, translating happenings and events from necessity into freedom, taking the world-problem upon himself, engaging in a brave struggle for spiritual existence, and claiming his share in the great life-task, he becomes a spiritual personality.

There is yet another sense in which this great and inspiring volume leaves a cloud of misgiving upon the spirit. It insists with telling force that religion must bring us a new world, not merely do something for the old, and that this new world comes to us not by pervasion, but by invasion, as a call to decision, surrender, and free co-operation. But while Eucken impresses us with the reality of this new world, and with its power of attraction, he leaves the greater question of its authority, its right to exact our choice and obedience, untouched. Obeying the call of our deeper and finer intuition, we commit ourselves to it, and take up the struggle with our lower experience. We take the

heroic plunge. We have the *will* to believe. Have we also the *right* to believe? If not, neither our will nor our intuition can ultimately sustain that faith in an over-world, and in a loving, active Omnipresence, which, thought out to its last consequence, is as great a paradox, as impassable an "offence," as the dogma of the God-man, or of the atoning death on the Cross. Not only is it brutally contradicted by the world, but the very intuition which embraces it has to search painfully for an inward justification of it, and only finds it in rare exalted moments of spiritual clairvoyance. The art of verified and sustained spiritual intuition is far too long for this brief life of ours. Unless the over-world is present with us, and in us, not only as an influence, an impression, a call, a pressure, but as a moral authority, objective though not external, with the right to search, to exact, to break, we are still left in our experience to the very subjectivism from which our philosophy of life wants to deliver us.

And this authority must prove itself in creative action. It must not merely demand, but give; it must ultimately owe its sovereignty over us to its own power, not to our surrender. It must reveal itself in power, vindicate itself in action, not merely unroll itself to our progressive vision and justify the venture of our intuition. That such authority and creative power can only come to us effectively in the supreme moral act in

history of an infinite Personality is the conviction of positive theology and evangelical faith. But to this we must return later.

Eucken's attitude to dogmatic Christianity has found suggestive and sympathetic expression in "Can we still be Christians?" In this volume he begins with a very lucid and penetrative discussion of the meaning and objective of Christianity, of those elements in the time-spirit which oppose and militate against the Christian view of God and the world, and of those elements in Christianity which would make its final rejection by our time a *felo de se*. The next section covers familiar ground in recapitulating the fundamental function of religion in realising the life of the spirit and its progress from universal to characteristic religion. In the final and constructive section he deals with the right of Christianity and its power to express itself in new forms, with the impossibility of effecting such a renewal within the Churches as they at present exist, and with the necessity of a new Christianity for our age. "We have asked," he says in closing, "whether we of to-day can still be Christians. Our answer is not only that we can be, but that we must. But we can only be Christians if Christianity is recognised as a world-historical movement still in flux, if it is shaken out of its ecclesiastical vitrification and placed upon a broader basis. In this lies the task of our time and the hope of the future" (p. 236).

Broadly speaking, Eucken puts in a plea for an undogmatic Christianity; not however, as need hardly be pointed out, in the sense of vulgar rationalism. For him; Christianity does not bring to man mere teaching and theories, not merely a world-view, but a great realm of facts standing above all argument, caprice or mood. As the eternal substance of Christianity he recognises its encompassment of the whole of human life which it translates into a new world, its effectual assertion of the supremacy of the spiritual, and its redemptive character. Christianity is the religion of redemption, and redemption not in the intellectual sense of the Hindoo religions, but in a deeply ethical sense. Its task is not to open men's eyes to an ideal world, to whose perfection the illusion of their senses had blinded them, but to call them to a struggle against evil in which the saving activity of God carries their action and gives their will for good a fastness in a world above their feeble capacity and striving.

There are many points in Eucken's valuation of Christianity which bring him into profound sympathy with the great evangelical doctrines. His practical and passionate interest in redemption is the chief of these ; his deep diagnosis of the present situation is another. Unlike the juggling optimism of a certain class of "Vermittlungstheologen," he does not seek to dull the edge or shallow the depth of the collision between Christianity and the age. Neither does he conceive

the Christianity of the future as merely a Christianity *à la mode*. While yielding to the legitimate demands of the age, and grappling sympathetically and fearlessly with its problems and entanglements, such a Christianity must stand above the time and make relentless war upon its superficial, petty and unspiritual tendencies, its empty, godless culture, its brutalising comfort and ease, its unscrupulous and heartless civilisation. Whatever we may think of Eucken's religious *eirenikon*, there is nothing equivocal in his attempt at reconciliation, and the minister of religion especially will find it at once a lesson and an inspiration. His attitude towards the person of Jesus is one of profound and reverent appreciation. In " The Problem of Human Life " no less than a third of the whole volume is devoted to the great Teacher and Initiator of a new life. And nowhere does he join beauty to strength so harmoniously as in his word-picture of Jesus—a tribute in which the poet that is in every great thinker unites with the philosopher in a harmony of peculiar charm. Seldom has the perfect man and religious genius been limned with so persuasive a combination of strenuous thought and gracious word ; we seek in vain either for the vapid sentiment of a merely romantic admiration, or for the desiccating touch of unemotional enquiry. Nor does he regard Jesus as a " mere man," to use a convenient phrase, but rather as a fontal personality. We not only see light in His light ; we kindle our light

at His. "He who makes merely a normal man of Jesus," he says, "can never do justice to His greatness. Modern historical research protests against such a flat rationalisation, and insists upon a recognition of the undiluted reality." In another passage he speaks of the unique position which Jesus occupied, not only in the believing hearts of His followers, but in His own consciousness. There is indeed a sense in which Eucken's thought may be regarded as Christocentric :—

"In as far as the image of Jesus remained present to the Christian consciousness, Christianity had a sure guardian angel against the danger of being submerged in the pettily human affairs and the sluggish routine of the everyday life around it, and also against the petrifaction and shallowing of its own life, against the rationalism of dogma and the pharisaism of complacency in good works. It had within it a power to recall it from all complexity of its historical development to the simplicity of the purely human and a bond preventing its threatened decomposition into sects and parties. Thus there has ever been within Christianity the movement back to Jesus, and a constant renewal from this source."[1] And again: "A human life taking the lowliest and simplest of courses in a remote corner of the earth, little heeded by its contemporaries, and brutally destroyed after a short fruition. And yet this life through the power of the Spirit that filled it has radically transformed our human values. He has rendered inadequate everything that had hitherto seemed to bring complete happiness; He has set bounds to all merely natural culture; He has not only branded all abandonment to mere enjoyment as frivolity; He has reduced all human life as hitherto understood to the category of mere 'world.' Such

[1] "Die Lebensanschauungen der Grossen Denker," p. 168.

valuations grip us and refuse to leave us, even after we have abandoned all ecclesiastical dogmas and practices. So this life sits in continuous judgment over the world."[1]

To a Christ of dogma whom the mind of to-day cannot accept without supreme self-betrayal and who must be deleted from Christianity if it is to command the loyalty of our age, Eucken, after the manner of modern liberalism,[2] opposes the Jesus of the Gospels, or rather behind the Gospels. His definition of evangelical doctrine, as found in " Can we still be Christians ? " casts a revealing and almost lurid light upon the condition of orthodoxy in Germany. Over and over again his statement of the doctrines accepted as orthodox strikes one with something like dismay. If these are indeed the forms in which these doctrines are taught to pious souls in Germany, then the sooner some merciful iconoclast shivers them to atoms the better. Over and over again we find the generally accepted doctrine of the Atonement defined as the appeasing of a Divine wrath which

[1] " Die Lebensanschauungen der Grossen Denker," p. 266.

[2] It should be noted, however, that Eucken has always maintained an attitude of complete independence towards organised " liberal " Christianity. He is, for instance, neither a member of the notorious *Protestantenverein*, nor did he lend his name to the movement connected with the name of Pastor Jatho of Cologne. In this connection a remark of his to the present writer may not ineptly be quoted :—" Much of the present-day liberalism suffers from superficiality. Its sense of the dark things of life, especially of the problem of guilt, is frequently too trivial to cope with the situation ; and, moreover, it lacks the self-sacrificing spirit which marked the old orthodoxy." (From an interview with Eucken in the *Australian Christian World*.)

refuses to be placated by anything less than the blood of the Son ; and once more as the removal of God's unwillingness to show a gracious face until He had seen the blood. That a barbarism which any intelligent child could meet with the story of a God who commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died, should still hold ground in any country except among obscure and illiterate sects is one of our modern miracles. Eucken's definition of the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation reveals an equally coarse and obscurantist conception—a mixture of superseded metaphysic and of a very unlovely form of implicit materialism. That the doctrine of the "two natures" in Christ should still be taught in Germany in its crudest and most vicious form is almost impossible to credit, and one confesses that the whole condition of German orthodoxy, as indirectly reflected in this book, fills one with an amazement which would be decidedly incredulous, were it not that examples of it reached one every now and then from the conservative side. For instance, in a recently published pamphlet on "Eucken's Christianity" by a German ultra-orthodox theologian, Dr. Ludwig von Gerdtell, we find it seriously set forth for present-day readers that faith in Christ's supreme act on the Cross is indissolubly connected with a world-view which includes a belief in angels, demons, and a supreme devil, and that any attempt at progressive doctrinal development

rests upon a complete misapprehension and involves a logical contradiction. This example of concentrated obscurantism is preceded by a long string of enthusiastic critiques by conservative leaders and organs, one of which declares that it contains "the redeeming word" for many a tortured, thinking soul. Henceforth we may excuse Isaac Watts for asking English children to "thank the goodness and the grace which on their birth have smiled."

In one instance, at least, Eucken seems to be labouring under the influence of his own orthodox early training. After having defined the traditional doctrine of the Incarnation in the repellent sense of a heroic expedient of the Godhead in face of a situation that had become intractable and desperate, he goes on to assert that all the other traditional doctrines—the Trinity, the virgin birth, the descent into hell, the resurrection and the ascension—arise out of this central dogma with a mercilessly inevitable necessity, and that therefore to remove one link of this closely concatenated system is to overturn the whole. "There is a tremendous logic about the development of these dogmas," he declares, "which cannot be broken in the middle; he who wants one cannot refuse the other." This is nothing else but an echo of the obscurantist Dr. Gerdtell's indissoluble connection between faith in the Atonement and belief in devils. The "tremendous logic" to which Eucken refers is

certainly present if the Incarnation be conceived in the metaphysical sense of the old creeds and of mediæval scholasticism. But modern positive theology has long moved from that position, and conceives the Incarnation as a moral miracle whose focal point is not the cradle but the Cross. And to a thus ethicised doctrine the virgin birth is as irrelevant as the empty grave is to faith in a living Redeemer. In saying this one does not mean to imply that a more detailed acquaintance with modern systematic theology would modify Eucken's demand for an undogmatic Christianity ; one rather suspects he would relegate such theology to the ineffectual mediating efforts which he so unequivocally rejects. But certain it is that modern Christian thought, having surrendered the underlying metaphysical presuppositions, knows of no such unbreakable concatenation of dogmas.

To sum up Eucken's attitude towards the Christ of history and of experience is not difficult, for he has expressed it in this book with characteristic directness and candour. That one person should be at once true God and true man, he declares to be contrary not only to scientific thought, but to the modern religious consciousness, and insists that such a view cannot be held without lapsing into docetism (which is, of course, quite true, if the old doctrine of the two natures be meant, and Eucken strangely seems to know of no other doctrine of the Person of Christ). In the

Atonement (again defined in the obscurantist sense) he sees the expression of a deep ethical conviction of the moral order, but rejects its dogmatic expression as belonging to a superseded stage. Mediatorship he regards as separating rather than uniting, and impairing the soul's worshipful relation to God by diverting worship to a supposed Divine mediator. From these dogmas he turns to the human Jesus with His incomparable life and His teaching concerning the nearness of the Kingdom of God and the dignity of man as the child of God. He is aware that historical criticism has not left even the Synoptic picture of Jesus untouched, but has rather discovered that it is painted with the medium of the adoring convictions of apostolic discipleship. Yet the purely human core can be disentangled, and Eucken holds with Wendland that the man who cannot discern the throb of a mightily original life within the framework of the Synoptic tradition declares himself incapable of historical enquiry. But can the human Jesus behind the Gospels fill the central and normative place assigned to the Christ by dogmatic theology? To this Eucken answers unequivocally in the negative, in the following passage ("Können Wir noch Christen sein?" pp. 36-37):—

> That position [the normative and ruling one of dogmatic orthodoxy] is grounded upon a relation to God, whose uniqueness emerges from the essential Divinity of Jesus; only on this supposition can the personality of Christ stand as the unconditional Lord and Master to whom the ages must

do homage. And while the person of Jesus retains a wonderful majesty apart from dogma, its greatness is confined to the realm of humanity, and whatever of new and Divine life it brings to us must be potential and capable of realisation in us all. We therefore see no more in this figure the normative and universally valid type of all human life, but merely an incomparable individuality which cannot be directly imitated. At any rate the figure of Jesus, thus understood in all its high and pure humanity, can no longer be an object of faith and Divine honour. All attempts to take shelter in a mediating position are shattered against a relentless Either—Or. Between man and God there is no intermediate form of being for us, for we cannot sink back into the old cult of heroes. If Jesus, therefore, is not God, if Christ is not the second Person in the Trinity, then He is man ; not a man like any average man among ourselves, but still man. We can therefore honour Him as a leader, a hero, a martyr ; but we cannot directly bind ourselves to Him, or root ourselves in Him ; we cannot submit to Him unconditionally. Still less can we make Him the centre of a cult. To do so from our point of view would be nothing else than an intolerable deification of a human being.

These words set forth with admirable honesty the real position of many, even within the Churches, who, having broken with the old dogmatic standpoint, shrink from their own convictions and take refuge in all manner of neologies and rationalisations. For such theological valetudinarians Eucken is a steel tonic.

Eucken's new Christianity, then, will have no central and normative Lord of life, no Divine Redeemer other than " God," conceived as that powerful and loving Omnipresence that enters our life with such re-inforcing and redeeming effect.

It will, therefore, be nothing else than the spiritual life as conceived in his philosophy viewed from the standpoint of inwardness and Divine initiative. In such a Christianity Jesus will be the greatest among the great historic personalities,

> a creative individuality which . . . raises the problem to a hitherto unguessed height, translates us into a new world, and by the complete immersion of its being in one all-dominating task, exercises a sweeping power to agitate and vivify the soul. The presence of such an individuality can become to us also a mighty impulsion and a source of new life. ("Können Wir noch Christen sein?" p. 194).

This new life comes to us, according to Eucken, diffused throughout the world-historical movement and not focussed in one point within that movement; and the individual reaches it through a spiritual immediacy, not through an actual and personal mediation. With this we have reached the culminating point in Eucken's sharp divergence from historical Christianity. His exceedingly interesting and valuable treatment of such questions as the authority and function of the Church and the validity of Christian ethics is but auxiliary to this central issue, and cannot be considered here.

One cannot but feel, first of all, that Eucken's approach to the person of Christ is, like his attitude towards the religious emotions, not sufficiently experimental. There are two non-experimental ways of approaching the subject, both needing to be combined with the experimental attitude in order

to be entirely valid. One is by way of historical criticism; the other by the test of the new idealism, the new moral realism, and the new religious consciousness, thus subjecting it not merely to the tribunal of a coldly investigating reason, but still more to moral and spiritual tests, and to the divination of that religious intuition over which psychology has now cast its ægis.

But it may be urged that the warm human figure of Jesus which the modern religious sense welcomes and the new idealism admits into its framework is not the *whole* historical Jesus. We must take that figure *plus* the impression it produced upon its followers, an impression which was nothing less than an experience of redemption. Now Eucken acknowledges that behind the dogmatic formulation there is a historical Christianity in which the stream of spiritual life ever grew in volume, and with which we of to-day feel ourselves in unity. But that is hardly specific enough. The question is not of those elect who lived the mysterious and profound life of the spirit in all the ages of Christendom, and walked with God in the cool garden of their souls, sometimes deriving nutriment from the very dogmas we of to-day reject in the interests of the spiritual life, sometimes ignoring or rejecting them. It is rather of that primitive experience of redemption which is the only thing in Christianity to which the common Christian heart vibrates, the one universal language among many sweet and

harsh provincialisms and ephemeral dialects of the soul, the experience behind Paul's doctrine of justification and Ritschl's, behind John Wesley's sermons and Schleiermacher's discourses. Jesus *plus that* is the Christ with whom we have to do.

Now one is well aware that many elaborate and ingenious efforts have been put forth of late to prove that the apostolic conception of Christianity was not due to the impression created by the Galilean Jesus (if so, one would have to add to the tragic features of that life the fatal quality of creating wrong impressions), but rather to an existing Christology or Messiah-doctrine whose affirmations were transferred immediately and *en bloc* to the person of Jesus. One need only think of the late much lamented Dr. Wrede's brilliant attempt to make us believe regarding Paul that it was his Jewish and Hellenistic prepossessions that led him to preach Christ crucified—to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness. Making all allowances for the influence of an existing Messiah-doctrine, few will in the end be able to resist the conviction that the speculative Messiah did not turn into the living Jesus of himself; all such uniting of divergent thought-elements round a centre can only be accounted for by a force of attraction which cannot possibly be over-estimated. And, as we pointed out already, this attraction was not a mere impression; it emerged in an experience of a

Redeemer "who loved me and gave Himself for me." What mere impression, however radiant, could impel the first confessors to preach a crucified teacher as the victorious Messiah, or force the mind of Paul into an identification of this Jesus, by whom he is alleged to have been scarcely influenced at all, with the Creator and Soul of the world? We may sift and test the dogma of the person of Christ in any way we will, but whatever our valuation of some of its traditional forms, it cannot be accounted for in quite so simple a fashion.

No one can read Paul's epistles with an open mind without realising that his doctrine of redemption, whatever be its defects and ephemeralities, is not an ingenious combination of old speculations with new impressions, but the expression of a vital experience, the passionate history of his soul. It was this experience behind the doctrine that spoke to so many storm-tossed souls throughout the ages, and is speaking still with a voice that no change of dogmatic position can silence. For while the age may abandon a doctrine in the Pauline sense, it will still continue to experience redemption in the Pauline sense, and across the centuries deep will still be calling unto deep. Throughout Christian history every voice that has spoken with universally appealing and convincing power has spoken out of this experience of redemption. Even in the realm of dogma it is significant that it is dogma based on this experience

that has triumphed, while the speculations of noble and subtle minds who lacked that experience have fallen dead on the backways of history. The history of dogma is nothing else but the history of the Church's experience of redemption. Can the human Jesus bear the weight of this accumulation of derivative experience ? Or was he really, as Eucken implies, the unfortunate occasion and starting-point for a departure from pure Monotheism and truly spiritual religion ? We not only may, but ought to, subject Christological dogma to the criticism and the freedom of a truly modern way of thinking. But such a modern theology, if it is to be anything more than the vague guesses of a blind man about colour, must start with a new religious psychology—an examinaton of the experience of redemption *from the believer's point of view.* It is precisely Eucken's distrust of the psychological method that deprives his approach to the problem of the necessary experimental robustness, and that has made him stop short at the critique of dogmatic crystallisations of religious life. Such a method must lead to the conclusion that the Church of succeeding ages has "produced" the Christ. But if we begin our study of the history of dogma with a sympathetic, intuitional study of the soul of Paul, we must, I think, be convinced that such a conclusion is as incredible as the atoms of Democritus which finally danced themselves into a world. Eucken would admit at once that all

great creative individualities are not merely historically but psychologically mediated, that the microcosm of the life must be interpreted by the macrocosm of its influence. But in applying this method and perceiving a unity of spiritual life through all the ages derived from Jesus, he fights shy of that central influence which has radiated forth from the Cross and which cannot immediately be squared with the new idealism. He recoils from the dogmatic Christs of the various stages of Church history to go back to the historical human Jesus. Two things, however, make this step less simple than it seems. If it is true that each age must have its own Christ, and that we cannot take the mediæval Christ for ours, is that because each age grasps some valid (or illusory) aspect of his personality, and, to that extent, "invents" Him? May it not be because "He leads the generations on," and has not yet finished "making Himself known unto His disciples"? Christian experience certainly attests it. We may rightly recoil from much in the dogmatic Christology; but the real question is not, Is it entirely valid? but, Are these vicious elements central aberrations, or are they merely the gropings through which "slowly the biography of the Christ is writ"? The key to an answer is found in that experience of redemption which is the fountain of doctrine. If *it* can be explained as a departure from pure spiritual religion, then the Christ goes, and with Him go the great believers

from Paul through the Fathers and Reformers to the present day—the men who not only experienced redemption, *but traced it directly to the Crucified.*

But moreover, the task of finding the historical human Jesus is not easy; and that not so much because criticism has sifted the biographical material with such a stringent hand, but rather because of what each student brings to that eternal Figure. Eucken rightly points out that the weaknesses, the idiosyncrasies, the intellectual, moral and spiritual lacunæ of each age, are reflected in its conception of the Christ. Is it not equally true that the character of every individual mind that approaches Jesus is infallibly stamped upon its limning of the great Portrait? Renan's Jesus reveals Renan more than Jesus. Hausrath's Jesus is the wise and benignant rabbi, emitting brilliant aphorisms which strike home even to the *blasé* mind of the nineteenth century; and there we have Hausrath's own somewhat amateurish and shallow mind. For Matthew Arnold, Christ is sweetness and light, speaks with the accent of a pleasantly pessimistic culture, looks at us out of wistful eyes, full of a vague intellectual pain, and we recognise the Greek soul of Arnold singing beneath a half-accepted Cross. Caird's Jesus is a poetical Hegelian; Seeley's a moralist touched with emotion. Does this mean that these men "invented" Jesus, as the ages "invented successive Christs"? May it not be that He interprets both the ages and

the individuals who try to understand Him far more than they interpret Him—that He is "a sign . . . that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed"? These questions bring us to a point where it is impossible to prove or disprove, for they concern heart-convictions, intimate and passionate intuitions. But this much may be said, that it has always been certain to the universal Christian consciousness that the crucified living Jesus accompanies all the generations, not to be appreciated and "vindicated" by them, but as their eternal Critic and Judge, who searches them most when they think they are searching Him.

As a necessary consequence of his valuation of the person of Christ, Eucken does not see the redemptive process focussed in one compendious historical act; or perhaps it would be truer to say that his philosophical conviction of a redemptive activity diffused through the whole of history largely determines his valuation of Christ. And going further back still, we see the radical cause in his conception of God. A creative spiritual power, such as he describes as initiating our spiritual activity, must be personal, and Eucken does ascribe personality to that spiritual Omnipresence. But the sense in which he applies this term to the "Godhead"—a word he deliberately prefers to "God"—is merely as a symbol to convey the idea of transcendence. If God is "personal" only in this sense, then a diffused

revelation of His power is completely adequate. But if real personality is the key to the spiritual life, God must be the supreme Personality; and such a Personality can adequately express itself only in a supreme moral act of redemption in history—an act corresponding to the ethical totality of that Personality, and therefore capable of becoming "a new pivotal and organising fact in the moral order." And philosophically the demand for such an act follows from the conception of the spiritual life as infinite and eternal action. In "The Truth of Religion" Eucken says:—

> It is sufficient for the religious conviction to experience the nearness of God in human suffering, and His help in the raising of life out of suffering into a new life beyond all the sufficiency of reason. Indeed, the more intuitively this necessary truth is grasped, the less does it combine with dogmatic speculation and *the more energetically is it able to work.*

But this last clause (the italics are ours), which is based on a philosophical pre-supposition, is exactly what the universal Christian consciousness denies. The experience of redemption in its classic and universal form tells us that God's saving help and grace cannot become centrally effective in human life, and in the race's moral progress, except as a personal and historical act, that merely as an inspiration in the hearts of men it is too variable and uncertain to meet the need for redemption on the racial scale. All through the

ages it has reverberated through the Christian heart in accents of a deathless conviction that God could only be to the soul what He is by doing what He has done in Christ. If history is the expression of freedom, if things really "happen," there is room in our world and in our thought for the supreme moral historical crisis of the Cross.

A subsidiary point remains to be noted—Eucken's attitude to miracles, which is one of unequivocal rejection on the ground that though we have departed from the extreme rigidity of mechanical causation, we yet cannot accept any such violent interruptions of what we know to be the natural order. He therefore recognises only one miracle—that of the spiritual life. But if the universal purpose be indeed the creation and sustenance of this spiritual life, if the purpose of God be redemption, then surely no supposed fixity of the natural order will prevent Him from doing anything that requires to be done *in the interests of that spiritual life, in the effectuation of that redemption.* This is something very different from the old retort to the miracle-rejecting sceptic, "God can do whatever He likes," an argument more worthy of a South Sea Islander than of a Christian believer. It is a definition of "omnipotence" *in the light of Eucken's spiritual miracle*; a conviction, not that God can do any arbitrary thing He likes, but that He can, *and will*, do anything and everything, however "incredible"

and "miraculous," that is necessary for the redemption of the sons of God. The question, then, is not, as with Eucken, Could physical miracles take place? but, Did they take place? And here the believer, as well as the scholar, has the full right to decide, if his conviction points that way, that such miracles were *not* necessary for the moral end of God and man, and are therefore traceable to the mythopœic instinct.

In conclusion, while Eucken's philosophy of religion belongs to the pioneer literature on this subject and is full of light and suggestiveness, and while his critique of Christianity and his attitude towards it are marked by deep spiritual insight and by all the powers of analysis and penetration which we have learnt to expect from this great thinker, they leave us unsatisfied, not because they do not square with the evangelical position but because they do not start from that experience of redemption which is the basal fact of religion, and specifically of Christianity. Even when he expresses himself most sympathetically on questions of dogma—for instance, when he values the doctrine of the Atonement as the expression of a very real problem, that of God's love and justice—his valuation rests on an appreciation of certain philosophical "truths" implied in the dogma rather than of the experience that created it. It was *not* a sense of the antagonism between God's love and God's justice that lay *primarily* behind the doctrine of the Cross. Even in Paul,

whose mind was certainly racked by that problem, it was not a consideration of the Cross in the light of that tormenting question, but a blinding vision on the road to Damascus in answer to a moral conflict and disaster in his own spirit, that was seminal to his theory of the death of Christ. Even in Augustine, whose "Confessions" teem with his wanderings "from empty shrine to empty shrine, from creed to creed," the Cross did not come in relief of doubt, however vitally and not merely intellectually that doubt be conceived, but as a deliverance from the lust that warred against his soul. That theories of the Atonement were not only coloured but determined by the nature of the problems that shook men's minds, and by the way their age conceived them, goes without saying. But in every such theory there is not only something which intellectual and moral environment cannot account for, but something that runs counter to such environment, and whose explanation must be sought in an experience which connected forgiveness and moral renewal indissolubly and beyond the reach of argument with the Person and death of Christ. We may be at liberty to say that this was a mistake; that while their experience was real their perception of it was faulty; that they, in fact, misnamed the God whom they ignorantly but rightly worshipped. But such a verdict can only be received with respect if it is come to after a patient, thorough, inwardly sympathetic examination of every

available characteristic instance of this classic experience. Eucken has all the qualifications for such an enquiry in the highest degree. He is emphatically a spirit in noble kinship with such experience, and one cannot but hope that he may yet be induced to write a companion volume to "The Truth of Religion" on the basis of such an enquiry. Meanwhile, his work, as far as it goes, is invaluable to the modern Christian mind, and suggests spacious and rewarding avenues of thought.

IV

Henri Bergson and his Philosophy of Creative Evolution

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Bergson's life and work—The ramifications of Bergsonism: Protean form in France—The Binet enquiry—Bergsonian Neo-Catholicism and Syndicalism—Bergson's inimitable style—His three main works—His crusade against Intellectualism—His conception of Time as concrete duration—Dialogue between an Intellectualist and a Bergsonian—The cinematograph of conceptual intelligence unable to grasp the movement which is the stuff of Reality—Sympathetic intuition steps into the *devenir réel* which is Life—The function of the intellect limited and practical, but "to see a limitation is to transcend it"—A logical revolution: "to understand in the fashion in which one loves"—From individual development to creative evolution—Epigenesis *versus* evolution: critique of mechanical and finalistic theories—The *elan vital*: Creation original and incalculable—Instinct *plus* intelligence—Is the *élan vital* purposive?: Mr. Balfour's criticism—Is it consistent with freedom?—William James on Bergson's Philosophy as a "Gospel"—Elements of specific value for Christian thought—Has human history a value for God?—The relation of God to the world—Professor James Ward on "a realm of ends"—An "anthropomorphic" God—The Incarnation—Nature's "prayer" to God and His answer in Christ—Creative evolution and the Cross.

CHAPTER IV

Henri Bergson and His Philosophy of Creative Evolution

KNOWN for years to an increasing company of philosophical *cognoscenti* in this country, Bergson descended upon a larger public at the end of last year with what might be described as a *gloire de salon*, had it not taken place under strictly academic auspices. His four lectures on "The Nature of the Soul," delivered at University College, London, attracted not only an eager crowd of keen students and thinkers, but also an overflowing concourse of enthusiastic *dilettanti* and jaded hedonists of the mind in search of a new sensation. For once the daily Press voluminously belied its reputation for an unshakable apathy towards intellectual movements, and cautious minds, acquainted with the event only through the newspaper articles, suspected a fashionable fad reminiscent of a certain "polite" revival of ancient philosophy some years ago, when Plato had his day, or, to be literal, his afternoon, judiciously diluted with tea and epigrams. In many of these articles the suggestion

of philosophy for the million—one had almost said, for the nursery—was emphasised, and to this view a chance remark of the Professor's, to the effect that philosophy could be approached successfully by the simple without any previous knowledge, gave a certain authority. Sneers about metaphysics for babes and sucklings and drawing-room philosophy were in the air among the intellectuals, and one's first impression of the great philosopher was unconsciously coloured by this atmosphere. Listening to him the immediate impression was that of an easy, suave, bland manner, a proficiency in *l'art de bien dire*, astounding even in a Frenchman, an *embarras de richesses* of illustrations at once homely and piquant, a genius of shrewd wisdom edged with the tinkling bells of brilliancy and humour—everything, in short, that makes for a popular vogue. But it did not take long to realise that the French *salon* manner, so deceiving to the British mind, covered something more than a master of words and a skilful manipulator of thought-mosaic. The popular lecturer slipped out of vision, and one stood before the world-philosopher, the man who has given us not only a new philosophy, but, one might almost say, a new mind; the man of whom William James said, "I have to confess that his originality is so profuse that many of his ideas baffle me entirely. I doubt whether anyone understands him all over, so to speak."

Born in Paris in 1859, Henri Bergson received

his early education at the Lycée Condorcet, where he remained for ten years and was *couronné* for his scientific attainments. His early bent was towards mathematics, and it is said that Marshal MacMahon once congratulated him, saying that he had never seen so small a scientist win so great a distinction, the reference being to the publication of a treatise in the *Annales de Mathématiques*, when the author was only sixteen. He intended to devote himself to the study of mechanics, and his ambition lay in the direction of continuing the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, who had won his youthful admiration. But as he studied the mechanical formulæ with a view to discovering their philosophical implications, he was led to a conviction of their inadequacy and even viciousness when applied to the life-process. Abandoning a narrowly scientific training for the study of "letters," he entered the École Normale Supérieure, and at the end of three years graduated in philosophy. After spending over seventeen years in teaching in various *lycées* and colleges, one of which was Clermont, where he wrote his first book, "Time and Free-Will," the thesis for his doctorate in 1889, he was, in 1900, appointed Professor at the ancient Collège de France, where he still remains. In the following year he was elected a member of the Institute.

To say that his lectures have made him world-famous, and that men of many countries and races flock to the sombre lecture room of the old Collège

de France, is to give a fair indication of the tremendous and almost protean influence of Bergsonism. His is the largest lecture room the college can boast, but not nearly large enough to accommodate the polyglot crowd of both sexes that gathers every Wednesday. Of late Russian has predominated among foreign tongues, and one so minded could frame some neat speculations as to what bizarre and exotic form Bergsonism seen through the Russian temperament is likely to take.

Already it has assumed a variety of interesting, not to say alarming, forms in the minds of over-ardent disciples in France and elsewhere, as, for instance, the Binet report on the teaching of philosophy at the French *lycées* testifies. This report arose out of a not unjustified sense of the danger of the anti-intellectualist movement to the cause of scientific research, some of the professors complaining that their students, under the influence of Bergson's ideas, had come to have a disdain for the slow and laborious methods of experimental science, believing that while science was all very well for mechanics and physicians, it did not give us reality, and therefore was of no importance to philosophers. When this point was brought up for discussion before the *Société Française de Philosophie*, Bergson made a spirited and convincing reply, showing that the theories attributed to him by these complainants bore no resemblance to anything he had ever

taught or written.[1] He had never belittled science as not giving us reality—for are not matter and space realities that the creative imagination cannot afford to lose sight of?—nor had he subordinated it to metaphysics, but had rather insisted upon a consolidation of the two based upon a clear distinction between them. In addition to evoking an outspoken and emphatic statement of Bergson's fundamental principles which must tend to clear the air of many misconceptions, the report went to show how completely Bergson's ideas had gripped the young mind of France. And not the young mind only; for professors vie with sophomores in handing in their submission to Bergsonism, and Binet reports, among many other instances, that at one single school no less than four of the professors have adopted Bergsonism without reserve and made it the soul of their teaching. Even world-famous philosophers plead his authority for their views. One has only to think of William James making this remarkable admission in his brilliant Hibbert Lectures on "A Pluralistic Universe" (pp. 214-15):—

> I have now to confess . . . that I should not now be emancipated, not now subordinate logic with so very light a heart . . . if I had not been influenced by a comparatively young and very original French writer,

[1] Cf. such passages as the following: "Reality itself in the profoundest meaning of the word is reached by the combined and progressive development of science and philosophy" ("Creative Evolution," p. 210).

Professor Henri Bergson. Reading his works is what has made me bold. . . . It is certain, at any rate, that without the confidence which being able to lean upon Bergson's authority gives me, I should never have ventured to urge these particular views of mine upon this ultra-critical audience.

While the Bergsonian philosophy is tunnelling its way through the academic stolidity of all countries, Bergsonism in France has long overflowed academical boundaries. There we have not only a Bergsonian philosophy, but a Bergsonian art and a Bergsonian literature; and, more important still, a Bergsonian Catholicism and a Bergsonian Labour Movement. Not unlike the Hegelian camp, Bergsonism has split up into a right and a left wing, the former being represented by the Neo-Catholics and the latter by the Syndicalists.

On the Catholic side, the influence of Bergson's ideas, strongly reinforced by James's pragmatic philosophy, in particular, his "Varieties of Religious Experience," gave rise to no less than eleven new reviews of Catholic philosophy and theology within one year. The main stimulus was in the direction of a fresh study of the saints and mystics, and one might note in passing that it is precisely the lack of such study that makes the new German idealism fall short of affording complete satisfaction when it becomes a philosophy of religion. On the more strictly speculative side, the Neo-Catholics adopted a pragmatic view

of truth as a growth rather than as a static limit, and of history as a process of progressive verification, holding that view in a sense which enabled them to encompass what must remain unintelligible to the Protestant mind—loyalty to their ecclesiastical heritage and generous hospitality to the new science and the new philosophy. The Vatican, however, did not regard this view as quite "safe," and made a not unsuccessful attempt to crush it in the Encyclical and Syllabus of 1907. But the fire is smouldering, and may spring into flame again at any moment.[1]

Poles asunder from Neo-Catholicism, we find the Syndicalist movement also claiming Bergson as its intellectual bond and inspiration. Until lately this movement has been but a vague and turbulent mass of yeasting impulse and passion, beating indeterminately against every institution and privilege, and propelled by blind will rather than carried by a dominating idea. Casting about them for some intellectual basis and justification which would give momentum and direction to their efforts, the leaders[2] of the movement seized

[1] Articles on Pragmatic Catholicism may be found in almost any volume of the *Revue Philosophique* and the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* during the last twelve years. Those by Edouard de Roy, an enthusiastic disciple of James and Bergson, are specially noteworthy.

[2] George Sorell and Edouard Verth may be mentioned as leaders of the Pragmatic Syndicalists. An excellent account of the philosophical side of the movement is given by C. Bougle under the title of "*Syndicalistes et Bergsoniens*" in the *Revue du Mois*, April 1909.

upon Bergson's idea of the *élan vital* as twin of their *élan ouvrier*, or at least as including it. At one with the modernists in revolting against dogma, tradition and inflexible formulæ, they hailed Bergson as their ally with a flourish of trumpets. "The Collège de France collaborates with the Bourse du Travail," they shouted with a flaunting assurance that smacks of 1789: "The flute of personal meditation harmonises with the trumpets of the social revolution." In how far Syndicalism will really be carried and rationalised by the leading ideas of the Bergsonian philosophy, or what distortions and refractions that philosophy may suffer in passing through the medium of that movement, cannot be foreseen. It must be remembered that Bergson offers no closed system. Like the reality he bids us enter into, it is still in flux; like his own *élan vital*, it cannot be packed into a formula. When asked for the Bergsonian philosophy in a nutshell, a hot-headed disciple retorts, "Can you put Maeterlinck's 'Pelleas and Melisande' into a formula?"

Bergson's style has been the object of almost extravagantly admiring comment; and there is no doubt that even when analysed in the dryest light it appears as the most wonderful vehicle through which philosophic thought has ever found speech. Professor James has somewhat realistically compared its complete adaptation to thought to the fit of elastic silk underclothing which follows every movement of the body.

But really great style is not merely the dress, but rather the flesh, of the thought that informs it, and Bergson comes nearer the ideal incarnation of thought in word than any other philosopher. His fertile and instinctive gift of illustration makes the reading of his books a beguilement even to those who are but fingering the fringe of his subject, and has earned for him the liveliest gratitude of the busy reader who finds non-illustrative work, such as Eucken's, for instance, a strain upon his jaded faculties. On the other hand, this gift constitutes a danger of self-deception for the student, who is apt to forget the profundity of the subject in the clarity of the illustration. It is so easy to think of a rolling snowball which is really the sum of the increment it gathers on its course, and cannot, therefore, like a rolling stone, be viewed statically apart from what it gathers in the rolling. But for all the delightful appropriateness, the absolutely creaseless " fit " of the illustration, the rolling self, gathering and carrying all the past experience, personal and hereditary, into the present, still remains a mystery. Superficial readers of Bergson are a little too apt to send that snowball rolling through our bewildered minds with a naïve—" the self is just like that," and a look of pained superiority when we suggest that there may be perhaps just a slight difference, and that enough to dash our delighted understanding with a shadow of mystery; a case of

The little more and how much it is,
The little less and how far away !

But the wealth and suggestiveness of Bergson's illustrations are only one aspect of a wider characteristic which separates him from schoolmen ancient and modern, and links him up to philosophical users of racy journalese like William James—the simplicity and directness of his vocabulary, and a certain Socratic homeliness which writers like Green and Bradley have made " bad form " in the English schools. One cannot but be amused at the way in which this Oxford superstition has filtered down to the general reader who, as a rule, admires James as the most " sound " and " reasonable " thinker he has ever come across, but laments his amusing but sadly undignified style ; while, as a matter of fact, it would add both to the sanity and the gaiety of the nations, if the pragmatic British mind criticised James's thought a little more, and adopted the English equivalent of his style, at any rate in ordinary discussion. It is not merely the French or Transatlantic genius for limpidity and neatness of phrase that determines such a style as that of James or Bergson (one does not, of course, claim any similarity for these two styles beyond that of directness and untechnicality) ; it is their conviction that to confine philosophy to the schools is to doom it to eternal sterility, that indeed its only chance of life is to bring it out into the open-air of common human nature. In this sense it

is paying Bergson a compliment to say that he has made philosophy attractive and accessible to the man in the street. Given a stolidly intellectualist view of philosophy, and "every man his own philosopher" is a sheer impertinence, a vicious apotheosis of the incompetent amateur; take an intuitional and experimental view, and it becomes the glory of the expert to enable every man to be, in some sense, his own philosopher. There is a metaphysic for babes and sucklings, and it takes a very wise man and superlatively powerful thinker to frame it. Bergson's style, however, conveys far more than the frank simplicity and the bland lucidity of the convinced and enthusiastic populariser. There are points ever and anon where incisiveness and flexibility pass into picturesqueness, and picturesqueness into something of the persuasiveness, the charm and the immediacy of poetry. Thus the past "presses against the portals of consciousness that would fain bar it out," and memories, "messengers from the unconscious realm remind us all what we are dragging behind us unawares." Or take this passage on the intellect :—

> Human intelligence is not all that Plato taught in the allegory of the cave. Its function is not to look at passing shadows, nor yet to turn about and contemplate the glaring sun. It has something else to do. Yoked like oxen to a heavy task, we feel the play of our muscles, the weight of the plough, the resistance of the soil. To act and to know that we are acting, to come into touch with reality, and even to live it, but only in the measure in which it concerns

the work that is being accomplished, and the furrow that is being ploughed, such is the function of the human intelligence. Yet a beneficent fluid bathes us, and from it we draw the very force to labour and to live. From this ocean of life in which we are immersed we are continually drawing something ; and we feel that our being, at least the intellect that guides it, has been formed therein by a kind of local consolidation. Philosophy can only be an effort to melt again into the All. Re-absorbed in its principle, intelligence may live back into its own genesis. But the enterprise is hardly one for collective and progressive effort. It will consist in an interchange of impressions which correct and complement one another, and will end by expanding the humanity within us until it shall transcend itself.

An admirably clear and concrete passage, yet having in it the very stuff of poesy.

Bergson is not a prolific writer. He is not only a thinker of commanding distinction, but also a literary craftsman of the most scrupulous finish. Thus one of his briefest studies, " Le Rire," an essay in æsthetics, on the comic spirit, recently translated into English, took twenty years in the writing. In the realm of psychology he has done some exceedingly interesting studies such as " Le Rêve," " L'Effort Intellectuel," and " Le Souvenir du Présent et la Fausse Réconnaissance " ; but these do not come within the scope of this book. An admirable " Introduction à la Métaphysique," which appeared in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, January 1903, is unfortunately out of print, and can at present only be read in a German translation. His three main works have been translated into excellent

English, under the titles of " Time and Free Will," " Matter and Memory," and " Creative Evolution," and it is on these, but especially on the last, that our brief survey will be founded.

" Time and Free Will," as its title implies, treats of the real meaning of time and its bearing upon the problem of free will. Briefly, the abstract time of the mathematician and the scientist is a spatial conception which may be symbolised by a piece of string with knots at regular intervals or by a stick with an infinitesimal number of notches. It takes account only of these knots or notches ; what lies between them might as well not be there. In other words, it takes a static view of time, emphasising not the process, the movement, but the artificial cuts that divide infinitesimally small durations, but yet durations, from each other. But this is merely to apply a convenient formula to unmanageable facts after completion. The operation is retrospective, *post mortem*. Real time is experienced duration, and from the experient's point of view the moments are not independent and uniform—not mere cuts on the stick we call " time." This concrete time is a becoming, a stream of self-creating, and it is by placing ourselves in this stream that we catch the meaning of reality. Time apprehended as movement and duration is of the very stuff of reality, and more fundamental to it than space ; it is " eternal." It is this aspect of Bergson's philosophy that has gained him the title of the

modern Heraclitus. What that dark-brooding mind of antiquity fore-riddled about the world being in flux and things ever changing so that we "cannot step twice into the same river," has found a strangely beautiful development in this most clear-voiced and silver-tongued twentieth century philosopher.

The bearing of this upon the problem of free will is apparent. If we allow the intellectual device we call time to determine our view of any action, we see it retrospectively, as completed, and we can find little room for free will. But if we look at it under the aspect of concrete duration, we see it in process of change even while we look, and a sense of free, initiative, incalculable force is the result. And passing from shallow symbols of the understanding to the deep experience of reality, we become aware that we are greater than we know.

"Matter and Memory," which followed upon "Time and Free Will," is, without doubt, the most difficult of Bergson's books, and a detailed account of it would lead us too far afield. It treats of spirit and matter, attempting to show the reality of both, and thus uniting idealism and realism in a higher synthesis. It may be suggestively, though only suggestively, summed up in his own words: "Spirit borrows from matter the perceptions upon which it feeds, and restores them to matter in the form of movements which it has stamped with its own freedom."

The book requires a fairly stiff training in psychology for its complete understanding, and its account of the mind and body in relation to each other and to the universe "outside" is of so original a kind that it requires "a new mind" to grasp it.

In "Creative Evolution" we come to the work which set Bergson by the side of Eucken as the most widely discussed philosopher of to-day. If a psychological training is necessary for a successful study of "Matter and Memory," the student of "Creative Evolution" should make himself acquainted with the fundamentals of the philosophy of natural science. It is a significant feature of the philosophic revival among us that physicists like Poincaré and Ostwald are among its most active pioneers, and the student can do no better than preface his study of "Creative Evolution" by a reading of Professor W. Ostwald's fascinating book, "Natural Philosophy."

As we shall found our account of Bergson's philosophy mainly on "Creative Evolution," it is only necessary to state here that it presents the view well-known to readers of Professor James, as "a strung-along universe." To the old theories of mechanical and finalistic evolution Bergson opposes a universe neither created once for all, nor logically necessitated, but simply dynamic, creative, the vital impulse (*élan vital*) at work. This is creative evolution, or rather epigenesis, (for evolution implies the unfolding of an implicit

programme) a life-movement, that *devenir réel* by which things evolve and grow.

Like Eucken, Bergson makes a frontal attack upon the intellectualism which has put its desiccating hand on the very springs of mental initiative, bred fatigue and sterility, evoked a senile distrust and nervous despair of all creative effort, and contributed more than any other single force to the popular dislike of philosophy and to the retreat to a mechanical view of the world. It has gained for philosophy the reputation of a concept-machine, and, on the whole, a soundly experimental materialism is more likely to knock its head against the door of life, and so be brought up short, and perchance led to the stars, than a philosophy to which the art of seeing life *sub specie æternitatis* means to sit still, and shut one's eyes and think of Hegel's logic.

Intellectualism is with us still—and by "us," I mean the average student, especially if he have any sort of theological interest—one had almost said, as an ancestral superstition rooted in the very fibre of the brain. The man whose life is sustained by any sort of theistic faith sets over against the world an omnipotent and omniscient God who created it, and who, in some more or less externally conceived way, rules its destiny. This means that he immediately becomes involved in a purely intellectualistic way in the time-worn problems of destiny, freedom, and the mystery of pain and evil; and to be involved in these problems after

an intellectualistic fashion is as much to be caught in the iron gin of mechanism as to view them from the standpoint of a purely materialistic theory of evolution. In both cases life is but the unrolling of a predetermined plan. In both cases there is a certain, one might say, a fairly large, amount left to human activity; but in the last resort the freedom of the human agent under such an externally conceived omnipotent Governor of the universe is just as illusory as under a frankly naturalistic scheme of physical "law." It is to the average mind, standing perplexed and paralysed in such an *impasse* not of its own making, that Bergson comes with a liberating word, as well as to the philosopher caught in the toils of his all-too-well articulated system.

Bergson starts, as we have seen, with a critique of the abstract artificial symbol of "time." For a *locus classicus* the pressure of a tyrannical tradition sends us once again to watch Achilles trying to overtake the identical tortoise which he has been pursuing since the time of Zeno. Get your intellectual "time-notches" marked in infinite number upon your infinitely long intellectual "time-stick," and however hard Achilles runs he will never overtake the crawling tortoise, because time will always remain infinitely divisible. The only objection to this is that in actual life Achilles does really overtake the tortoise, and that from *his* point of view there is no such thing as a notched time-stick, only the putting forth of an

effort which embraces time and space and the outstripping of the tortoise in its duration.

Time is, in fact, a fiction—" a bastard space " as Bergson points out. It is an abstraction. What is real is duration and succession as experienced by a consciousness which is a whole in continuous change or movement. And this change, in contrast to inanimate change which proceeds in accordance with a general formula, is personal and cumulative. Its " moments " are not independent ; each moment brings something new, something that never was before and that carries the whole past within it, not as determining it, however, but as affecting it at every stage. We may dismiss the process as adaptation to environment ; but, as Bergson puts it, it is an active adaptation for its own ends, and therefore a true creation, very much in the sense of the creative element in oratory, where the speaker begins by working *with*, but ultimately works *on*, the ideas and passions of his hearers till he can raise them to his own standpoint and infuse his own desires into them. Bergson presents this change, this movement and becoming, this self-creation, call it what we will, as the very stuff and reality of our being. To accept this is to break sharply and finally with intellectualism which declares change to be illusory, and with naturalism which defines it as mere transmutations and combinations of the same ultimate elements. This latter view would take us back to the

atomistic theory of consciousness now definitely abandoned by leading psychologists.

To return to our thoughtful man in the *impasse* of intellectualism. This is what a Bergsonian philosopher would say to him : " You are applying the laws of statics to a problem in dynamics. You are, if you will excuse my saying so, trying to cook your hare before you have caught it. You are trying to reduce a fact you have never really grasped to concepts." " But," persists the man, " my mind craves for identity, rest, unity ; I must start there." " No," replies Professor James Ward (surely not a pluralist), " you may end there, possibly, but the only place to start from is what your bugbear, William James, calls the pluralistic universe." " Then you don't believe in concepts ? " stammers the man. " We do, indeed," replies the Bergsonian ; " without them we could not handle the life-flux for any practical ends, but first have the body, then conduct the *post mortem*." " But there are so many things in your universe of change and flux that contradict those necessary laws of thought, without which my mind would go to pieces ! In your world, for instance, A becomes B, A and C are connected by B, and such like absurdities." And then the Bergsonian would once more produce Achilles, who overtook the tortoise without asking leave of logic, and all the thousand and one things which logic says cannot be done, and of which life makes very short work indeed.

Start with concepts, and reality subsides into meaningless fragments.

Man hat die Teile in der Hand,
Fehlt leider nur—der geist'ge Band.

Then the intellectualist is likely to do one of two things. He may find room for all those worrying contradictions and oppositions in that convenient logical portmanteau known as the Absolute ; or he may take the Bergsonian's advice so far as to consent to have a look round in his strung-along universe before proceeding to his congenial task of conceptualising.

If he takes the former course, he will piously assure the Bergsonian (we must remember that, intellectualist though he be, his is that sentimentally pragmatic mind that goes to philosophy for purposes of " edification ") that all these contradictions which seem so real are dissolved and reconciled in the Absolute mind. To which the graceless Bergsonian may reply, that it is not the Absolute to whom he is trying to teach philosophy, but, on the contrary, to a very " relative " being, who, so far from holding all the antinomies of the universe within his grasp, cannot even know to-morrow's deeds until he has lived through to-morrow. Should the religious intellectualist, however, take the second course, and declare himself willing to start with this poor pedestrian world of flux and change, his next question will be, " How am I to get inside

this creative movement ? " And at this point the Bergsonian will remind him that there is plenty of time to speak of that creative evolution which covers all being ; our immediate starting-point is the creative evolution of the individual, generally termed development, which, we have seen, is a continuous and irreversible process of self-creation.

How, then, are we to enter into this movement of the individual consciousness ? Intellect will not help us. " Not through the gate of intellect," says Bergson, " which works by conceptual logic." Now it must be remembered that this is directed as much against a naturalistic conception, which holds the world of sense as the sole reality but uses intellectualistic logic to defend its position and expose the absurdity of assuming an ideal Absolute, as against intellectualism which uses the same logic to establish that Absolute. Both are fundamentally intellectualistic, and Bergson opposes both by frankly challenging the theoretic authority in principle of this conceptual logic. While assigning to it an important sphere in which it reigns supreme, he submits that that sphere is not the world of being and fact, not life as a whole. Viewing the life-flux as it operates in the consciousness, we have seen that the logical definition of motion which conceives it as " the occupancy of serially successive points of space at serially successive instants of time " can only give us a purely imaginary " occupancy "

or "state," not motion at all; for motion is exactly what happens *between* those points, and for this there is no conceptual measure. Take the homely image of the rolling snowball. Consciousness may be conceived as a sort of rolling snowball determining its own direction by the new demands of each moment, and, of course, carrying with it the increment which creates it. Apply your intellect to that, and it will tell you of what it calls the " psychic states " of this rolling snowball of consciousness. It will thread them like beads on the string of a fixed and unchanging " me." But such a " me " does not exist, for take away the snowball from the increment which creates it as it rolls, and you have nothing left. But intellect has only the spatial time-stick to measure with. It makes arbitrary cuts in the process, and presents them very much as cinematograph pictures. They are cut-out pictures of states of rest, and however quickly you let them appear on the screen, you have not caught the reality of motion. While you are cutting out discontinuous points and states with your logical scissors the snowball rolls on, and, unlike a rolling stone, it does not remain the same ; it carries the accumulated increment of the past into a creative present. Without losing the old, it creates the absolutely new. And intellectualism is just that perversion of the rational point of view which denies change in *things* because its *definitions* of things are fixed. Thus, once it defines two things as independent,

it refuses to admit the possibility of any sort of connection. To use Sigwart's very apt saying, according to intellectualism a horseman can never in his life go on foot, or a photographer ever do anything but take photographs.

But if we cannot seize it with our conceptual faculty without breaking it, how are we to get into touch with it? Bergson's answer is that we can only do so in one way, by placing ourselves at a bound, or *d'emblée*, inside "the living, moving thickness of the real." There at the centre we hold the key to the situation. We can now exercise our valuable conceptualising faculty, and by means of a convenient intellectual abstraction make reality portable and easy to handle for practical purposes. Those who have heard Bergson lecture will remember how the sound of the living voice, the crisp intensity of articulation sending the words like a noiseless bullet into the mind, aided the intellectual conviction behind his constant insistence upon that self-instalment in the heart of reality. "Messieurs, si vous pouvez vous placer pour un moment dans ce va-et-vient . . ." and again, "Si vous pouvez vous y placer pour un seul moment, messieurs. . . ." It is the reiterated pleading of a great conviction.

The question remains, however, How are we to accomplish this placing ourselves within this *devenir réel*, if the intellect cannot put us there? By sympathy, says Bergson, by living, intuitive

sympathy. Does intellectualism deny to such sympathy a place in speculative thought? The fact remains that by it alone we get into the heart of things in the making, behind results and contradictions, into the why of things, which means that by this alone we touch reality. That reality should be of this perverse and anti-intellectual nature is deplorable from the intellectualist point of view, but the Bergsonian is inclined to triumph secretly that these things are hidden from the wise and prudent intelligence, and revealed to the babes of despised and "elementary" intuition. "Philosophy is very simple," says the man who is perhaps the subtlest of all living philosophers, "and you are so learned." In other words, "Except ye become as little children." It is by sympathy, then, that we get at the *élan vital* of a man, at the living centre of his character and of his philosophic thought. Intuitive sympathy puts us in a flash in the stream of "making," and we know the movement of reality by a living understanding. Knowing the force that produces surface contradictions, we understand them all, and find the true life-centre in none of them singly. Of course, this is vulnerable to the disconcerting question, How can you prove that we possess this faculty of intuition? The materialist denies it, as he denies what he terms the mystical life-force it apprehends; the intellectualist relegates it to the realm of cerebral emotion. But the question is not so serious as it looks, except to the man who

merely looks at it and paralyses his vision by the fixity of his stare. We all—plain man and philosopher alike—talk of the limits of the intelligence, and try to fix these limits. How do we encompass that? Can the intelligence see its own limitations? Is not to see a limitation to transcend it? But we perceive the limitations of the intelligence just because we are something more than intelligence. We are not merely analysers, we are constructors; not merely critics, but artists, creators. We can put ourselves into the stream of another's vital impulse, because the same stream flows through us; it both carries us and *is* "us." Our thoughts, emotions, actions, purposes, are hidden from our intelligence in their origins; we cannot know them until they have arisen; they are indeterminable and impredicable. Yet they are surely the very stuff of our reality. We do not "know," we *feel* and *live* them, and out of this feeling and living is born that sympathetic understanding we call intuition. Behind and around intellect there is consciousness, the soul. It is the nebulous matrix out of which the shining nucleus of intellect is formed and in which it lies embedded. It explains the intellect and leads it into its true kingdom. Not the little point of light, but the half-illuminated fringe around it, is the thing that "matters," and our reversal of these values is due to a one-sided development of our life in which many of the most important tracts of instinct and feeling have been allowed to go dark.

We fumble at the gates of reality because the keeper of the keys, which is intuition, lies asleep.

Bergson's philosophy is, therefore, a call to the sleeper to awake, a religion, if the term may be thus loosely used for once, which cries to self-sunk weary man, "Ye must be born again." Says Gaston Rageot, "Bergson claims of us first of all a certain inner catastrophe, and not everyone is capable of such a logical revolution. But those who have once found themselves flexible enough for the execution of such a psychological change of front discover somehow that they can never return again to their former attitude of mind. . . . They have understood in the fashion in which one loves, they have caught the whole melody." "*They have understood in the fashion in which one loves*"—one imagines Kant's indulgent smile and Hegel's deliberate lift of the eyebrow, had they chanced to light upon the phrase; one pictures Mr. MacTaggart's weary closing of inscrutable eyes at the sight of such honeyed verbiage perpetrated in the name of philosophy. But the really disconcerting thing about it is just that it is *not* mere verbiage. To understand in the fashion in which one loves—if there be a Soul of the world, a super-materialistic, psychical element in life, that must be the *only* fashion of understanding; and modern metaphysics is giving a belated hand to modern psychology in the discovering of this "more excellent way."

As for the intellect to which mankind has given so exclusive an honour, Bergson startled a good many naïve intellectualists by declaring its function to be practical rather than theoretical, to be indeed specially framed for dealing with matter, and itself something of a constitutional materialist. He has equally startled the man in the street who happens to have assimilated his leading thought, for the man in the street joins the intellectualist in setting the intelligence high above (only he would call it low beneath) the practical faculties, practical being understood by him to cover such matters as selling tea and pork, and theoretical being applicable to the discovery of a new scientific "law," or of a new planet. This being so, it might be more intelligible to say with William James that the intellect gives us a theoretical knowledge *about* things, while the intuition enters *into* things and so opens the door to true speculative thinking. There are, as we shall see presently, two elements in creative evolution : the life-force that creates, and the material on which it works. This material has a static quality. It may be reduced to "law," represented by symbols and abstractions, predicted and calculated by the intelligence. The life-force escapes the intelligence except in dead fragments and isolated aspects, just as a man may understand and be able to parse and explain every single word in a poem, and yet have no understanding of the creative genius that moulded these

words into a thing of joy and beauty. Intellect, then, cannot enter what James calls "the thickness of reality." It can only gather the scum of dead results that floats on its surface. But this does not mean that it has no part in the understanding that comes after the fashion of love.[1] For one thing, this intuitional plunge into the core of things is necessarily very limited in duration; it is only by calling the intellect to our aid that we can think vastly and realise eternities. Again, our experience of reality is too unwieldy in its myriad impressions and points of contact to be utilised in our search for truth, unless it is laid hold of and co-ordinated by a stable scheme of concepts. In no other way could we really handle that intuitional experience which gives us our firmest foothold upon reality. But to this we shall return later.

Having considered individual development, our thoughts may expand to that creative evolution which covers all life. Evolution, strictly taken, means a gradual unfolding of what is implicitly present from the first. Bergson uses it, and more loosely, for what should be known as epigenesis, the continuous creation of what is essentially new. The Bergsonian illustration for this process would

[1] "Concepts," says Bergson, "are indispensable to intuition, for all other sciences work with concepts, and metaphysic cannot do without the other sciences."—*Introduction to Metaphysic*, p. 13.
"It is impossible to have an intuition of reality, that is, an intellectual sympathy with its innermost nature, unless its confidence has been won by a long comradeship with its external manifestation."—*Ibid.* p. 57.

be the creation of a melody out of notes, of a poem out of words, of a picture out of colours, all of which constituents are there already taken in isolation, but become a new whole by creative synthesis. To Bergson evolution is "a change which is an active adaptation, a utilisation of what promotes life, an escape from what antagonises it. It means a continuous and irreversible process of self-creation." His scientific training enables him to discuss the various mechanical theories of evolution with great thoroughness and breadth, and his critique of Herbert Spencer, especially will interest English readers. The essence of all mechanical explanations is to consider past and future as calculable in terms of the present. But if time is real, Bergson shows that such "calculation" can only be a rough guess resting on a rough experience of a repetition which is only approximate at best. Only of inanimate things, or of isolated fragments and aspects of the life of a living being, can this calculation be made with approximate certainty. Only in geometry does the present contain the future, for the very simple reason that geometry does not know of a future in any real sense. When applied to life, science can only give us a cinematographic reproduction, with this important difference, that the "pictures" of science do not "move" at all. The "movement" of science is, as we have seen, a series of fixed points, determined by "law," but, as a matter of fact, the moving thing

only passes *through* these points ; if it " stood still " *at* any one of them, then we would be forced to give the lie to our eyes, and agree with Zeno that Achilles can never overtake the tortoise, run he ever so fast. As Bergson points out in " Matter and Memory," granted that a thing " is " at some place at any moment, we may argue that it never moves at all.

From his very minute and illuminating criticism of mechanical explanations, Bergson turns to those teleological theories which are the peculiar temptation of the religious mind. Finalism is, of course, more flexible than mechanism, where the whole universe stands or falls by the tremble of a grain of dust in the balance. But this must not blind us to the fact that it makes time as unreal as mechanism does, and sees in evolution only the realisation of a programme already drawn up. It is, in fact, " mechanism from the other end." Moreover, it can no more explain that " manifestation in existence of what was already real " which it recognises, than mechanism can explain the change in order. We have happily got beyond the conception of a world in which grass was created for the cow, and the fly for the spider, and mint for the lamb-eating man. But we are still haunted by a more or less internal finalism by which each separate living being exhibits the operation of the final cause, its parts being compacted for a common end—the greatest good of the whole—and evidences an intelligent

prevision on the part of that "soul" of life which the theist calls God. But facts contradict such a theory at every step. For instance, the finalist tells us that the facts of repair and restitution in the living body show that it is struggling towards an end which accident and damage are not allowed to frustrate. But it is equally true that the same living body harbours parasitic lives which may, and often do, attack their host. This means that the conception of internal finality is self-destructive. On the other hand, assuming that these parasites, instead of antagonising the whole, work together for its final good, we are landed in that external finalism which facts have long since forced us to surrender.

Bergson's evolution is creative, then. We have the creative life-force and the dying matter upon which it acts. The law of the dissipation of energy tells us that matter is ever sliding down the slope of life towards inertia, decay and death. The life-force is pushing up the slope, insinuating itself into matter, interrupting its downwards impetus, moulding it into increasing adaptation to environment. Thus matter is at once a hindrance and a stimulus. The forward push of the *élan vital* is beset with resistance, failure, deviations, reversions. It drives a way through many a mass of resistance and is checked now sooner, now later. Here it can go no further, and the end of the line is called vegetism. There it bores deeper, and the terminus is instinct. In one instance only it has

tunnelled its way through matter and come out at the other end as consciousness. This is a loose and graphic way of representing the process, but we are describing neither scientific law nor philosophical ideas, but facts, and have Bergson's authority for condensing them in this homely fashion. With vegetism we have little concern here ; instinct, however, is of acute interest to us. It has been described as "a blind, yet extremely delicate discrimination, exhibiting action without ideas, unlearnable and unimprovable." Now it is clear that instinct can never provide a clue to life. It can use it, but, lacking powers of reflection, it cannot apprehend it. It is only as, united with intelligence, it rises from blind adjustment to divining sympathy that it apprehends life, and that apprehension we term intuition. Coming to intelligence, we may say briefly that, while instinct gives us a knowledge of *things*, intelligence gives us a knowledge of *relations*. It would follow that man, who contains within himself a rudimentary and undeveloped instinct as well as a onesidedly developed intelligence, carries within himself that secret of vital apprehension which will give him the freedom of the universe. Human life contains many a broken light of this perfect intuition. We see it in the genius of the artist which enters into its object and tears the very pulse of life from it to set it before kindred souls who can appreciate it. We see it—and perhaps it is a more common experience than we imagine—

in those moments of "cosmic consciousness," when our absorption in the All and our personal independence are one in lucid equivalence and adequacy to each other.

Bergson more than once goes to the painter and the author to seek illustrations of creative evolution. In every sweep of the artist's arm, nay, in every really free act of ours, we experience this creative life-impetus, immanent in us and yet transcendent; our personal effort, yet deeper than personal and conscious endeavour. Looking outside our own consciousness, we have seen it in the chlorophyl function of the vegetable and the sensory-motor system of the animal, thrusting life forward to greater efficiency by the manufacture and utilisation of more and more effective explosives, successful up to a point not so very far along the line of its thrust, beaten at that point. Turning back to man, we see it all but successful, beaten by nothing apparently except by the thing we call death, and reaching its highest known effect in the intuition which apprehends it. We see spirit borrowing from matter the perceptions by which it feeds, and restoring them to matter in the form of movements which it has stamped with its own freedom. And, finding the intuitive way into the mood and nature of living things, we may, after barren years of intellectualism, once more feel the joy and the thrill of him who finds the pearl of great price hidden in the field of life. Bergson expresses this very characteristically

in a remarkable passage which is worth quoting in full :—

> This faculty [intuition] is in no way mysterious. Every one of us has had opportunities to exercise it in some degree. Any one, for example, who has been engaged in literary work, knows perfectly well that after long study has been given to the subject, when all documents have been collected and all sketches made, one thing more is necessary—an effort, often painful, to set oneself in the heart of the subject and get from it an impulse as profound as possible, when there is nothing more to be done than to follow it. This impulse, once received, sets the spirit on a path where it finds again all the information it had collected and a thousand other details. The impulse develops itself, analyses itself in expressions whose enumeration might be infinite ; the further you go on the more is revealed, never can you say everything that is to be said ; and yet if you turn back to apprehend the impulse you feel behind you, it is hidden from you. For it is nothing but a direction of movement, and although capable of infinite development is simplicity itself. Metaphysical intuition seems to be of the same kind. Here the counterpart of the sketches and documents of literary production is the totality of the observations and experiences collected by the positive sciences. (*Introduction to Metaphysic*, p. 56.)

Fugitive moments of intuition seem to be all that is granted us at this stage, but reflection keeps all those things and ponders them in her heart, and of these spiritual appropriations also it is true that

> Tasks in hours of insight willed
> Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.

Many readers of Bergson are left with the question as to how far his *élan vital* is really

purposive and teleological, and whether it implies a personal God. In his interesting and suggestive critique of Bergson in the decennial number of the *Hibbert Journal*, Mr. A. J. Balfour asks whether that purpose of "self-augmentation" which Bergson predicates of his *élan vital* can be called a "purpose" in any real sense of the term. Ignorant not only of its course, but of its goal, it has driving power, impulse, creation, but no plan of operation, and many failures. Does such a blind force not lead us into a more serious metaphysical *impasse* than the acceptance of a God *with* a purpose? This criticism, while it suggests the real weakness of a pluralism which stops short of that "God with a purpose" to which it must ultimately lead, is less than fair to Bergson's view. Bergson's *élan vital* is purposive—the fact of its being wholly unmechanical involves a teleological character—purposive not in that vague, groping sense Mr. Balfour reads into it, but rather in the sense of desire and direction.[1]

[1] In Bergson's words: "Life progresses and endures in time. Of course, when once the road has been travelled, we can glance over it, mark its direction, note this in psychological terms and speak as if there had been pursuit of an end. But the human spirit has nothing to say of the road which is going to be travelled, because the road has been created *pari passu* with the act of travelling over it, being nothing but the direction of this act itself. Evolution, then, should give to each stage a psychological interpretation, which is, from our point of view, the best explanation; but this explanation has validity and even significance only in a retrospective sense. The teleological interpretation, such as we shall propose it, must not be taken for an anticipation of the future. It is a vision of the past in the light of the present."—*Creative Evolution*, p. 54.

Granted that the conception of purpose directed towards a certain *end* is absent, yet, if that purpose is, not "self-augmentation," as Mr. Balfour puts it, but rather self-development, wherein is such a conception less worthy of the spirit of man than the Christian conception of a free and full life in Christ whose end and reward are not outside itself but in that very "self-augmentation," which Mr. Balfour deprecates—in "life more abundant"? To discuss the question with any degree of thoroughness, one would need to enquire what exactly Mr. Balfour means by "*God* with a purpose." If "God" be defined after the manner of idealistic monism, for instance, as equivalent to the Absolute, and if to this there be added the theistic conception of God which ever tends to merge into Absolutism, then "God with a purpose" means the very necessitarianism from which Mr. Balfour has all his life been trying to escape; for the "purpose" of such a "God" cannot be thwarted by the will of His "creatures."

But we must pass on to the second half of the question, which is generally put in the naive form, "Has Bergson a personal God?" In attempting a reply it must be borne in mind that Bergson's constructive work, which is likely to take the form of a philosophy of religion, is not yet written. Creative evolution does not necessarily involve a God such as we conceive of in our moments of deepest spiritual insight—personal, loving, redemptive. Taking a "hard" view of his

élan vital, we may see in it nothing more than the Will of Schopenhauer, or the Unconscious of von Hartmann, brought within the verifying reach of human experience. But a more intuitional reading will discover between the lines certain intimations of the "Father who worketh hitherto." If we may venture to adumbrate the "Bergsonian" God, we shall, perhaps, not go very far wrong in believing that He will be "the ideal tendency in things" made personal. Further, that "a face like our face" shall answer to the soul's deepest emotions and aspirations; that is, a God who works as we work, creates as we create, baffled by environment, opposed by enemies—a God with whose purposes we can intelligently co-operate in a real sense, and who, immeasurably above us, will, by His power and grace, further our purposes if they are in consonance with His own.

It has been further objected that to be at the mercy of this urgent, moulding, and only half-aware life-force is really to be delivered over to a new kind of necessitarianism far less noble than either that of monistic idealism or that of Calvinistic theism. But granted that man, according to Bergson, is carried by the All, and that this implies a kind of determinism, if that All transacts itself in the individual life, if its purpose is immanent in man, then freedom is born in the house of necessity, and necessity, so far from thwarting it, nurtures it into the full-grown

stature of manhood. Our Calvinist forbears used to tell us, when we complained of the excruciating paradox of predestination, that its antinomies were reconciled in the experience of the " elect," whose " free " choice was rooted in the prior choice of God. Well, any to whom the idea of a freedom rooted in necessity is a paradox may see it lived in the life of every creative artist who never creates so freely as when, in the grip of an inspiration his own, yet transcending him, he is pushed forward by a creative impulse that often carries him where he would not go, and where he yet had always longed and meant to go. And going back to Mr. Balfour's criticism of Bergson's " purpose," if that purpose be really the purpose of a creative artist, then it cannot be so fixed as Mr. Balfour would have it fixed. Says R. L. Stevenson, " I as a personal artist can begin a character with only a haze in my head ; but how if I have to translate the haze into words *before I begin* ? I can find language for every mood ; but how could I *tell anyone beforehand what this effect was to be,* which it would take every art I possessed and hours and hours of deliberate selection and rejection to produce ? " Shall life be less spontaneously and originally creative and more bound to the rigidity of a " plan " than art ? Does life merely manufacture, is it merely a kaleidoscope in which the same bits of glass appear and re-appear in endless combinations ? Is there not a deep truth in the philosophy of the village drunkard who said that

God isn't tied to His own purposes, but can "change His mind," just as we can? To shift the action of the *élan vital* on to religious ground, is not ultimately our spiritual freedom rooted in the freedom of the Spirit that bloweth where it listeth? Or, to go a step further, does not collaboration imply independence? The above quotation from Stevenson is taken from a letter on the subject of literary collaboration, in which he lays it down that successful collaboration is only possible if each author is allowed to do his own part independently. Let us add to this, even though the one be immeasurably superior in creative genius, and the originator of the idea, as was actually the case with Stevenson. If then the "soul" of the *élan vital* which we call God, chooses us with the passionate choice of the artist to work with Him in the realisation of His idea which He imparts to us as an impulse, an urgency, a forward push, this, so far from precluding our liberty, implies it. But, in carrying the Bergsonian doctrine thus far, we are getting beyond his intentions or implications.

Bergson's doctrine, then, in its most central meaning, is a "gospel"—a call from the illusions of the self-deceived intellect to that deeper level of intuition at which the soul touches a reality that is neither the dream of some motionless Creator, nor a neat machine-made chain, but creative life. And this gospel does not lay disrespectful fingers upon the intellect, or count science a mean thing,

or contract the horizon of life to the pin-point of intuitional emotion. Says Miss Evelyn Underhill :—

> This huge vision of time and motion, of a mighty world which is always becoming, always changing, growing, striving, and wherein the word of power is not law, but life, has captured the modern imagination no less than the modern intellect. It lights with its splendour the patient discoveries of science. It casts a new radiance on theology, ethics, and art. It gives meaning to some of our deepest instincts, our strangest and least explicable tendencies. But above and beyond all this, it lifts the awful weight which determinism has laid upon our spirits and fills the future with hope ; for beyond the struggle and suffering inseparable from life's flux, as we know it, it reports to us, though we may not hear them, "the thunder of new wings."

On the other hand, the gate into this new world of splendour is strait, and the road to it narrow. To many of us, cradled in intellectualism and absolutism, standing knee-deep in the material pre-occupations of our exacting time, yet straining longing eyes towards the hills of lofty and disinterested thought, this revulsion to empiricism seems a desecration of philosophy. She should pluck the stars out of the heavens, we say, not lie sprawling in the mud of spawning life and grub for earthworms. Nothing is more significant of our enslavement to a narrowly intellectualist convention than the supercilious reception which some leaders of thought have extended to Eucken and Bergson until recently. While a large and influential literature is gathering round the former,

and his influence is making itself felt in many departments of life, notably in education, the Sanhedrin of truly "wissenschaftliche" German "Gelehrte" are even now not quite sure if a man can be capable of valid thought and yet write like a "Schwätzer" (babbler), *i.e.*, like a straightforward, educated man frankly desirous to communicate his thought to other straightforward, educated men. As for Bergson, his unashamed empiricism has caused the chaste votaries of the pure idea to blush, and as long as his fame had not reached its zenith, he was described in not a few quarters as a translator of Yankee psychology into metaphysics. It is unpalatable to the professional intellect to be told that a dead bird, however skilfully stuffed, can neither sing nor fly, and that all that intellect can do with its "bird" is just to stuff it for museum purposes after it is dead; to have a philosopher, and one whose sweep of constructive thought and massivity of knowledge it must admit, tell it in philosophical language what it long since dismissed with a smile as poetic sentiment :—

Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
  Of things forever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
  But we must still be seeking ?

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings ;
  Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things :
  We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

Of all those who have felt Bergson's philosophy as a call to conversion from the idolatry of discursive thought and the pharisaism of the speculative intellect, none has more clearly and urgently presented it from this angle than William James in "A Pluralistic Universe."

"We are so subject," he says at the end of his lecture on Bergson, "to the philosophic tradition which treats *logos*, or discursive thought generally, as the sole avenue to truth, that to fall back on raw, unverbalised life as more of a revealer, and to think of concepts as the merely practical things which Bergson calls them, comes very hard. It is putting off our proud maturity of mind and becoming again as foolish little children in the eyes of reason. But difficult as such a revolution is, there is no other way, I believe, to the possession of reality."

SOME THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BERGSONISM

The elements of specific value for Christian thought in Bergson's philosophy are not a few. Taking his conception of concrete and "eternal" time as our starting-point, it is clear that if we accept such a doctrine as true to reality, then whatever "new" theology the exigencies of our age may demand, it will be based upon the conviction that human history has a value for God. It will find no place for the half or wholly Hindoo speculation as to our essential and

immediate one-ness with God, and of human life as the mere making explicit of what was implicit in man from eternity, and of sin and failure as one of the means by which the God in us comes to complete self-knowledge, or as mere surface specks on the garment of the soul that will one day shuffle off this spotted robe to find itself *where it has always been*—on the Eternal Throne. It will return with a deeper passion to Lotze's *dictum*, "that in the actual passage of events something should actually come to pass, something new which previously was not; that history should be something more than a translation into time of the eternally complete content of an ordered world—this is a deep and irresistible demand of our spirit under the influence of which we all act in life." If human history has no value for God, and therefore no reality for us, and if the work of Christ consists in the removal of illusions merely, the universe may be eminently "thinkable," but truly moral life in it will be impossible, for our experience of a moral order is reduced to an illusion. If, to use the language of a certain school, God sees us as we *are* from eternity—"on the Eternal Throne"—then our sense of sin and failure, our penitence and repentance, have no corresponding reality in a Holy Will which must "maintain unhurt the world's moral aim"; then our conscience has no fastness in the ethical vitality of God. Or, to take another significant saying of this type, "Sin does not matter to God."

All one can say to that is that if it does not "matter" to God, it cannot "matter" to anyone else either, and we get back to the old time-stick with its notches, to Achilles outstripped by the tortoise, and to the barren logic of identity with its motionless and perfect world *sub specie æternitatis*, its self-redeeming God, and ourselves as mere "readers of the cosmic novel."

Going on to consider the problem of Free Will, we find ourselves facing the old, tough question of the real relation of God to the world, of the theistic conception of God and its tendency to slide into absolutism, of the Calvinistic bias which has strangely blended with an incurable Hegelianism in a large stream of modern theological thought. The adequate discussion of such a problem is beyond our scope; it would fill a volume and demands the acutest and profoundest thought our time can boast of. Putting it in its crudest form, men's minds at the present day are torn between the alternatives of a pluralistic "finite" God and an omniscient and omnipotent Supreme Being. Nowhere has this controversy been treated with such lucidity and mental grasp as in Professor Ward's Gifford Lectures, "The Realm of Ends," an exhaustive work to which students will long have to resort. But while we cannot enter into such discussion here, this is tolerably clear, that however heartily the theology of the future may retain the theistic conception of a Creator who somehow over-rules

His world, who is omniscient and omnipotent, whose purposes are with the children of men, and whose thoughts penetrate the spirit of man to kill or to make alive, such supremacy can no longer be conceived in any sense which makes the freedom of man *less than creative.* We are not concerned here with settling the claims of these rival conceptions of God, but there are few theologians whose theology is of the heart as well as of the intellect who would not agree that a pluralistic "finite" God, *primus inter pares*—a Being whose experience is akin to ours, who follows our history with His sympathy and furthers every worthy purpose of ours—is more in accord with both the intellectual and the deep spiritual demands of the modern mind at its noblest than an Absolute and Infinite to whom all things are known from eternity, and whose purposes are, therefore, not affected by new developments.

Whatever form our conception of God is to take, it must be the conception of a living God with a living world—that is of a "limited" God—not an orientally conceived Absolute, a potter God with a clay world, nor the inconceivable and meaningless Absolute of monistic idealism. It will be urged by some that Christian experience has always corrected theology, and reconciled its metaphysical antinomies. We have already referred to the way in which it has always managed to slip through a hole in the close-meshed net of Calvinism. But as the mind of man advances, the demand that

our " theory " should square with our " practice " will become more and more vociferous, and intelligent men will no longer be content to accept a theology inadequate or opposed to their experience of reality. Whether we are pluralists or not, we must, at least, start with the Many—the whole history of philosophy is one tremendous illustration of the disastrous consequences of starting with the One. And if we start with the Many, and with Bergson enter into the reality of their life-experience, then, however soon we may be forced to pass on to the One, and however rigidly we may insist on His creative supremacy, it cannot be in such a sense as to deprive the Many of their real personality and creative freedom. But this means that one half of our present-day theologies will have to go, for they are as really necessitarian as the hardest Calvinism, with this important difference, that they do not apply their underlying principles. It looks as if the theological thought of this century would once more become Theo-centric rather than Christo-centric, the problem being to arrive at a conception which meets the demands of modern thought, and can be equated with perfect mental and moral honesty with that of " the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Upon this problem the closing passage of Professor Ward's " The Realm of Ends " is much to the point :—

One final question, among the many that suggest themselves, I must not wholly omit. We have been contemplating

the universe as a realm of ends. If we were asked what is the end of this realm of ends we might answer rightly enough that its end can only be itself; for there is nothing beyond it, and no longer any meaning in beyond. It is the absolutely absolute. Still, within it we have distinguished the One and the Many, and we have approached it from the standpoint of the latter. In so doing we are liable to a bias, so to say, in favour of the Many; led to the idea of God as ontologically and teleologically essential to their completion, we are apt to speak as if He were a means for them. Those who attempt to start from the standpoint of the One betray a bias towards the opposite extreme. The world, on their view, is for the glory of God: its ultimate *raison d'être* is to be the means to this Divine end. Can we not transcend these one-sided extremes, and find some sublimer idea which shall unify them both? We can indeed; and that idea is love. But here again we trench upon the mystical, the ineffable, and can only speak in parables. Turning to Christianity as exhibiting this truth in the purest form we know, we find it has one great secret—dying to live, and one great mystery—the Incarnation. The love of God in creating the world implies both. "*Leiblichkeit ist das Ende aller Wege Gottes*," said an old German theologian. The world is God's self-limitation, self-renunciation might we venture to say? And so God is Love. And what must that world be that is worthy of such love? The only worthy object of love is just love: it must then be a world that can love God. But love is free: in a ready-made world, then, it could have no place. Only as we learn to know God, do we learn to love Him; hence the long and painful discipline of evolution, with *its* dying to live—the converse process to incarnation—the putting off the earthly for the likeness of God. In such a realm of ends we trust "that God is love indeed, and love creation's final law." We cannot live or move without faith, that is clear. Is it not, then, rational to believe in the best, we ask; and can there be a better?

It comes as a surprise that the philosopher of creative change should not have extended his enquiry to a philosophy of history; it is along this line, one imagines, that Bergson's thought will bear its choicest fruit. At any rate, his work is of great value to the Christian thinker who is troubled by the difficulty of giving to a concrete historical fact a universal and eternal meaning. This problem determines Eucken's negative attitude towards the great facts of the Incarnation and the Cross.

From such a revised conception of God, some of whose elements have been thus provisionally defined, at least two theological tendencies will issue. There will be first a reaction from the extraordinary fear of anthropomorphic forms which have paralysed our theology of late. This curious attitude has filtered down to the average Church member, who smiles indulgently when God is described as leading His people in war, as repenting, as angry, as defending His rights against His enemies and laughing at their confusion, in an Old Testament lesson—as if a "childish" view of a God who really *does* things was not greatly to be preferred to a metaphysical view of an Absolute which is beyond everything and therefore means nothing. We are constantly being warned against the unpardonable sin of viewing God anthropomorphically, as if we could view anything at all except anthropomorphically. We see all things in the same childish, inadequate way.

Flower in yon crannied wall,
I pluck you out of your crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and what man is.

But we only know the flower anthropomorphically, as we know God, and we are surely coming to see that such anthropomorphic knowledge is truer to reality than the vague abstractions we think higher. And if the anthropomorphism of the Old Testament is crude and frequently unethical, how do we correct it but by a new anthropomorphism conditioned by the new revelation of humanity in Christ Jesus?

Another theological movement springing from a corrected conception of God will be a return from the Cross to the Incarnation as central. But it will not be a return to the old metaphysical conception of the Incarnation, and the consequent substitution of the cradle for the Cross. It will be a new insistence upon the Incarnation as posited in that self-limiting and self-renouncing act of God we call creation, posited in a race which, being involved in a moral difficulty consequent upon its freedom, failed, yet did not fail in its root, and therefore could evoke the latent Saviourhood of its noblest offspring. And it was not merely evoked by a situation that called for Atonement. It is rather the secret and animating pulse of creation. The Word made

Flesh belongs to the very idea of human evolution, and the Incarnate God is thus not merely the Saviour, but the root of humanity, using the word in no abstract sense, but in the concrete sense of a race of human beings. A stauro-centric theology will, therefore, meet the situation as little as a theology based upon a purely speculative idea of Incarnation and an imaginary essential one-ness of man and God. The Cross and the experience of redemption must remain the starting-point of the theology of the future, but it will not be wholly adequate to the demands of the spiritual reason, if it does not centre in the Incarnation conceived as fundamental to humanity and as the key of creation and focussed in the Cross.

And coming from the Incarnation posited in creation to the Incarnation manifest in history, there is something in Bergson's principle of the creative originality of life to make such an Incarnation reasonable and acceptable to the modern mind. On the premises of a monistic idealism, to which evolution means an unrolling in time of the eternally complete, the coming of Christ can have only an ideal significance; *i.e.*, monistic idealism must evaporate history into metaphysical speculation, if it is to square it with its presuppositions. But under the influence of the doctrine of creative evolution the necessity for an Incarnation in history appears. Let us recall the action of Bergson's vital impetus. Pushing along one line

it is blocked and terminates in vegetism. Another line allows it freer play, and it emerges in instinct. In man it forces a tunnel through matter and emerges as human consciousness and personality, and the creative evolution of man is so steadily and triumphantly progressive that " we have no repugnance in supposing that consciousness will pursue its path beyond this earthly life." But this last—the conception of nature perfecting man along psychical lines of development, and the fact that the " newest " and highest thing in man is his " susceptibility for God "—suggests the emergence of a perfect human personality in whom that susceptibility for God shall have developed into a " real union of being " with God. One has only to remember the scientific commonplace of " nature's response to environment," summed up in " function precedes organ," to realise that if that susceptibility for God be the " function," then God becomes the " environment " of nature, and the next step must be the creation of that " organ " through which the organism shall be perfected. And if that perfecter of the organism we call Christ is that towards which the vital impetus is pushing, then life with its infinite originality and inventiveness will bring the Christ in, in a way quite impredicable by reason and quite unintelligible to the " evolutionary " mind. Looking at man as in process of creative development, we see the urgent demand for a Christ. Looking at the Christ of history, we feel that in

Him that demand is realised. But, further, if the great hindrance to the development of the God-instinct is what we call sin, then the perfecter of the organism must be a Saviour.[1]

We see, then, that

> All tended to mankind,
> And, man produced, all had its end thus far :
> But in completed man begins anew
> A tendency to God.

And if this chain of ends is really an epigenesis, not a mere evolution, if life really creates, then the lowly birth in an obscure corner of the world, and the life flowering from so poor and bitter a racial soil, and the Galilean teaching falling so unheeded upon the scornful ears of the great ones of the earth, and the ruthless and brutal cutting off of so briefly-blooming a flower, leave the understanding untroubled. For if the purpose behind the pulsing pressure of the *élan vital* be indeed the bringing in in due time of One who is to be the Perfecter of the race, because its Saviour, it will bring Him in with the incalculable originality of its creative self—an offence to our conceptual logic, but the power of God to the intuitive sympathy that becomes contemporaneous with Him. And such contemporaneousness is faith.

[1] It seems hardly necessary to deal with the popular objection that if Christ be indeed the perfect Man He must come, not at the beginning, but at the end of the race's moral evolution. But it is clear that the highest perfection is *productive*, and the perfect Man could do nothing for the world's perfecting if he came at its end.

If we accept creative evolution, then, which means a world in which things really "happen," we shall be forced to accept a God also who expresses Himself in creative action called forth by changing situations. And further, if we believe, as we all experimentally believe, that one really personal act of ours may be of critical and supreme significance for all our life, then we cannot refuse the conviction that a personal God can, by an act of His which is, as it were, the sum of His moral output, change the life of the race. We may talk of a diffused Divine influence and inspiration, and of the spiritual immediacy, the intimacy of intuition by which the soul touches this stream of influence, and no one will deny that this is really so. But we contend that it is so only because that "stream" is gathered up into that one, great, critical, creative act we call the Cross. It is that act of God, and the Incarnation of which it is the focus, that makes it possible

> That at the next white corner of the road
> My eyes may look on Him.

To believe in a creative evolution is to believe in miracles.

V

Christian Theology and Recent Philosophical Thought

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Christian Theology and Recent Philosophical Thought

Review of situation—The alleged "insularity" of theology—Nineteenth century theology and Hegelianism—The influence of theology upon philosophical thought—Sören Kierkegaard—Neander, Dorner and Harnack—Ritschlianism—The contribution of recent thought-movements to theology—A more penetrative critique of our Christian culture—The consideration of the modern experience of Redemption as well as of the "Pauline"—The teaching of Jesus not a preliminary to Paulinism—The authority of religious experience and the Christ of history—Principal Forsyth and Dr. Denney on objective authority—The incomplete ethicising of theology—Eucken's "Either-Or" and the "offence" of the Gospel—Has History "vindicated" Jesus?—The Atonement in the light of Activism and Creative Evolution—A new doctrine of the spiritual reason: the experience of Redemption as a Gnosis—The mutual relation and independence of philosophy and theology—Philosophy as a fore-runner—The autonomy of theology.

CHAPTER V

Christian Theology and Recent Philosophical Thought

We have seen that a revolt from our soulless and complacent civilisation, a recognition of the truth-value of religion, and a repudiation of the hegemony of the intellect are fundamental elements of modern thought. We have also seen how these elements find their formulation and expression ; how Eucken especially challenges a materialistic culture in the name of the spiritual life ; and how both Eucken and Bergson see the foundation and explanation of that life in religion, and how both deny the claim of the intelligence to be the pathway to reality. Also how Bergson calls upon the soul of the age to shake off the yoke of a usurping intelligence, and, yielding to the still small voice of a misprized intuition, place itself humbly in the stream of creative life and so make contact with reality. And even so cursory a survey of the thought of these two philosophers as is given in these pages has gone to show that neither of these thinkers founds his views upon subjective " faith," or " feeling," and that both manifest an

intellectual temper at once stringent and liberal. While Eucken lays insistent stress upon the need of a speculative basis alike for a philosophy of life and for religion, Bergson uses the results of biology and psychology, neither of them "scientific" in the sense of being mathematical, yet both having standards and methods of their own, to establish over against the idol of discursive reason that intuitive understanding which is the mysterious and profound life of the soul. And if their thought is destined to influence theology, it is no less true that theology has had an unsuspected share in the shaping of it.

One often hears it said, and never more often than to-day, that theology has precluded its own future by perversely cutting itself off from the philosophical thought-currents of the time. But this hackneyed statement will hardly bear investigation. The average preacher may have insulated himself intellectually in the past, partly from narrowness of training, partly from pre-occupation with the work of "serving tables," partly from a pragmatic desire to adjust his message to immature minds, and from the fear of coming into conflict with rigidly conservative elements in his congregation; though even this is true only in a far more limited sense than many sweeping critics would have it. But the theologians certainly cannot, on the whole, be charged with such parochialism of thought. Where conservative theology has rejected or ignored modern tendencies,

it has generally been after examining them, deliberately preferring the metaphysics of the schools, be those schools Greek, mediæval or Scottish. On the other hand, the influence of modern thought can be traced in a large section of our decidedly conservative theology, and this is conspicuously true of Hegelianism. There is a by no means rare type of nineteenth century orthodox theology which claims a direct descent from Calvin and the Puritans, but needs a Hegelian key for its correct understanding; which discourses eloquently of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but calls upon a *Deus ex machinâ* in the shape of a Cairdian Absolute to save it out of all its speculative distresses—a situation humorously suggestive of the Lusiad of Camoens, where the sinking mariners call upon Christ, but it is Venus who actually comes to their assistance. Indeed, the popular assertion that modern theologians rejoice in a complacent ignorance and ignoring of the wider world of thought is extremely limited in its application; and it would be much nearer the truth to say, on the contrary, that what they have suffered from is rather an insufficient interest in their own subject, born partly of a righteous revolt against dogmatocracy, and partly of an infection with the fashionable virus of trivial religious romanticism. As a matter of fact, the modern demand for a more generous subjection of theology to philosophical influence can be met by the counter-assertion that the influence of a

pragmatic theology has gone far more largely to the shaping of modern philosophical thought—at least in Protestant countries—than the philosophers are ready to admit. We must insist not only upon the indubitable importance of all the philosophies as helpers of Christian thought, and helpers just in proportion as they do not aspire to control it, but also upon the supreme importance of theology for the philosophies as mediating a revelation which no scheme of speculative thought can secure; and which has developed and is developing all the great philosophies. It is for the latter reason even more than for the former, that theologians and philosophers cannot afford to sulk in their respective camps.

To give a few illustrations of the influence of a despised theology upon an ambitious and fiercely independent young philosophy is not difficult. Beginning with the reaction against a blind and fatuous culture-worship, we find, for instance, that Ibsen, whose moral mordancy and ethical realism have perhaps done more to open men's eyes to the hollowness and viciousness of our belauded social system and of our religious conventions than any other single force, was most crucially influenced by a philosopher who was first of all a theologian —Sören Kierkegaard, whose thought inspired "Brand." Nothing in all the literature of revolt against the steam-roller we call "Christian" civilisation bites quite so deeply as Kierkegaard's theological protest, which starts not from the

emotional and aspiring individual whose fiery spirit can no longer brook the brutality of the gigantic monster man has created for his own destruction, but from the believer, who, having been driven to God by the hounds of sin and remorse, chooses, or rather finds himself in the great "Either-Or," and stands a redeemed personality *contra mundum*. He defies convention, not with the æsthetic fury of the Nietzschean superman which ends in dashing itself to pieces against the steel-ribbed monster, but with the spiritual passion of the forgiven soul, through whose tears the world's values—aye, and many of the Church's values—are seen as dust and wormwood, and the reality of whose penitence acts as a corrosive acid upon the illusions of a trivial and specious civilisation.

Take again that recognition of the truth-value of Christian experience which is so characteristic of modern philosophy. A true philosophy of life must include at the least a consideration of religion as a great world-historical movement, and we find Eucken, for instance, bringing a great deal of his energy to bear upon a very thorough study of Church history, or rather, of the history of dogma. And if we turn to the three illustrious names in that field—Neander, Dorner and Harnack—we find that all these three have adumbrated the modern psychological movement, connected for us with the name of William James, which virtually views the experience of redemption as

the critical factor in religion, at once the source and the criterion of doctrine. Had Eucken's absolutist standpoint permitted him to follow the tendency of these great Church historians, he would have given us the most constructive book on religious philosophy we have had as yet. To positive theologians the new philosophical interest in religious experience will seem but a belated acquiescence in what they have long stood for. Take this typical passage from Neander :—" The fact of the redemption of sinful man through Christ constitutes the central point of Christianity. It was from the influence which the reception of this fact could not fail to exert on the inward life of man that this new shaping of the religious consciousness developed itself ; and hence proceeded, in the next place, the gradual regeneration in the habits of thinking so far as they were connected directly or indirectly with religion." What else is this but the anticipation of the psychological method applied to religion, which is likely to issue in the development of an autonomous psychology of religion, which will in turn react in a revolutionary manner upon systematic theology ? Or if, instead of selecting one of the many passages from Dorner that crowd to one's mind in this connection, we take the characteristic and distinguishing clause of the Nicene Creed—" Who *for us men and for our salvation* came down from heaven "—we see in it not only the *leit-motif* of Dorner's noble reading of Church history and

lay our finger upon the animating pulse of all Christian thought, but we also realise once again that philosophy might well have spared itself much toilsome groping and fumbling at the skirts of the religious problem, had it not been so disastrously self-sufficient. In Harnack's massive volumes, again, we have a brilliant and penetrative treatment of the same thesis : that the *certitudo salutis* is the vital principle, lacking which, dogmatic speculation has invariably fallen dead upon the twilight shores of history. Thus, " Lucian and Arius worked out their theory without a genuine thought of redemption," while, on the other hand, " Athanasius's doctrine had only one tenet—God Himself had entered humanity. It is rooted wholly in the thought of redemption." And reading the history of dogma through the simple and candid, yet so deeply penetrative, eyes of Neander, and the massive and opulent mind of Dorner, and the trenchant and divining temperament of Harnack, we seem to see before us a Lutheran Bergson saying, " If you could only for a moment place yourselves in the centre of that spiritual life-flux we call the experience of redemption, gentlemen. . . ." Yes, it is Bergsonism anticipated. Start with the movement of the redemptive experience in the soul, and you may dogmatise to your heart's content ; nay, you *must* dogmatise if this experience is to be made operative in this hard, practical world of ours. But start with dogma, like Arius and Lucian, like

nearly all the Gnostics, with the notable exception of Marcion and a few of the lesser lights, like the Rationalists and the speculatively orthodox schools in England and Germany, and you will find yourselves making arbitrary patterns with the broken splinters which were once a whirling star.

Coming to the great ethicising movement in philosophy with its recognition of the primacy of the moral in knowledge, we again see theology outstripping its swift-footed sister in the Ritschlian movement. The Ritschlian value-judgment preceded Eucken's activism, and while theology has passed beyond the Ritschlian position which its perverse and despairing attitude towards metaphysics left suspended somewhat in the air, philosophy has not yet quite got there. It knows as yet only the self-realisation of the *redeemed personality* in action ; it has no room for the self-revelation of the *Redeemer* in action, and the soul's experience of it as the only " spiritual immediacy " possible in a world where things happen and do not merely evolve themselves. That the personality can only touch and know the Super-personality through and in the redeeming *actus purus* of the latter is an implication of activism which theology drew before the philosophical label was invented. But here again we find an actual, though quite indirect, anticipation of Bergson's fundamental principle. Most of us remember a type of *ad captandum* apologetics in

vogue during the latter part of last century, and by no means quite extinct yet—the attempt to "prove" the truth of Christianity, and, what is still more wonderful, the Divine nature of its Founder, by what is sometimes called "the witness of the centuries," with their *Gesta Christi* and their long roll of illustrious believers. Following this strange argument to its logical conclusion, it would appear that the further back we go, the less "proof" we can adduce for the truth of Christianity; that, *e.g.*, in the fourth century the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ must have rested on somewhat slender and shaky foundations, while in the first century it could only be accepted by naïve subjectivists without the historical sense—by Ritschlians like Peter, John, and Paul, who were content to venture upon a value-judgment, while soundly objective and philosophical thinkers like Gamaliel wisely decided to suspend their judgment and await the verdict of the centuries. It is at this point that Bergson joins hands with the pragmatic theologian. "Await the verdict of the centuries?" he would say. "But life can't be 'judged,' it must be 'lived.' It rolls through each century, nay, through each minute, as a new creation, a surprise to which no measures of the balancing reason are adequate. It must be ventured upon by you as it was ventured upon by the first man, and though millions have stepped into that stream before you, you are still (strange as that may seem to you) the first that ever stepped

in, and it is only by touching its depth and force in a lonely and unaided venture that you can touch it at all."

But all this does not mean that theology can afford to sit in the teacher's chair, and dole out as much of its ripe wisdom as a docile philosophy will accept. On the contrary, it also has much, very much, to learn from the recent thought-movements.

In the protest against a material civilisation and a merely æsthetic culture, for instance, both philosophy and literature are still miles ahead of Christian teaching. Ibsen, for example, is by no means "a back number" for Christian thought. We are only just beginning to realise that God can be neither wheedled nor bullied. We still tend to treat all that goes by the name of "love" as Divine, all culture as "Christian," and all conventions as moral imperatives. We have not yet quite realised that culture needs to be redeemed as much as degradation, and that the Cross shatters not only the selfish, unscrupulous, cruel life of a world with its back to God, but also many sweet, sentimental and truly charming aspects of our so-called Christian civilisation, just as it shattered the sentimental, solicitous friendship that cried, "Be that far from thee, Lord," and the domestic affection which, beaten back with stern yet loving hands, said, "He is beside himself." No Christian teacher has emphasised this aspect of things with more

mordancy and verve than Principal Forsyth, and if the philosophical verdict of dissatisfaction with the poor contribution of modern civilisation to man's spiritual life is taking on among ourselves a deeper and more keen-edged form in a Christian criticism of modern spiritual cults and tendencies, it is largely owing to his weighty and impelling insistence.

There is, however, an obverse side to what one may call the Forsythian criticism of conventional and æsthetic religious culture. There is a terrible *Deus non irridetur* written up, not only over our moral superficiality, but over our misapplied moral stringency, over our Puritanism as well as over our laxity. If we have missed the moral poignancy of the Cross and the inscrutable sternness of Grace, we have also missed that simple playfulness and childlike sweetness, that rosy freshness of joy and bold homeliness of intimacy which are the other half of Calvary. If we have not sounded the depths of penitence and holy judgment, it is also true that

> We know not how our God can play
> The babe's, the brother's, part;
> We know not all the ways He has
> Of getting at the heart.

Our Protestant religious culture especially has been somewhat slow in learning "with simple souls to play love's crafty part," and "love's forwardness" is an offence to its sophisticated mind. In contending for a theology which

measures the situation on the racial scale and at its central depth, it must not be forgotten that to make such a theology narrowly stauro-centric has tended to create a soil upon which the flower of spiritual joy and intimacy cannot grow. That such a theology should so often be found to co-exist with a lack of the evangelic spirit and a conventional view of the Church's function is by no means accidental, and it is here, no less than in the region of a sentimental religion of divine Fatherhood, that a stringent critique of our Christian culture and ethic is needed.

And this point leads us on to the second great element in modern thought—the emphasis upon religious experience. It is precisely here that all our theologies seem to break down, the speculative "new" ones a little more, the positive dogmatic ones a little less. We have with us to-day, though already in its decadence, a type of theologising which starts from a mixture of philosophemes, and then tries to fit the Christ into a mosaic frame wrought chiefly with Neo-Platonist, Buddhist and Hegelian fragments, and its character is too obviously unexperimental to need detailed discussion. The other type of theology, however, which we may describe as narrowly Pauline, does start from experience—from what it calls the "classic" type of Christian experience—with that of Paul as the paradigm. And it not only starts from that "classic" form of the experience of redemption, but ends with it too; in fact, it

makes it the only universal form, and conveniently excludes all variations as too individual, and casual, and provincial to call for consideration from a theology dealing with the whole situation on the racial scale. It generally includes a more Roman than Protestant conception of a *depositum fidei* once for all committed to the Church—a term which sometimes stands for "the Gospel," at others for that classic experience of redemption. But while the experience of redemption has such a continuity and unity that the most modern of the moderns is conscious of a central kinship with Paul, we cannot look upon the Pauline experience as a paradigm in the sense of dismissing every deviation from it as "irregular," and idiosyncratic. To maintain such a position would be to make Paul the measure of Christ's redeeming personality. No single age can exhaust the experience of redemption, and a theology which professes to be based upon that experience must take the modern as well as the Pauline into its most serious consideration. And that modern experience is a sense and conviction of the Fatherhood of God, conceived not in the one-sided poetic way of the past century, but, shall we say, a Fatherhood as wise and tender as that which inspired George Macdonald's faith, yet rooted not in domestic parenthood, but in the tragic *Deus Caritatis* of "Brand"? Shall we risk being misunderstood by saying that such an experience will have something of Chestertonian humour and *gaieté*

de cœur, as well as the childlike affection and intimacy conveyed by Father Faber's artless hymns, just because it has stood on Calvary and because it lives in the searching light of "the four last things"? To the specifically Pauline theology this will appear mere verbiage, simply because such a theology refers everything to the "classic" experience, just as Eucken refers religion as a whole to the absolute spiritual life, and does not study its actual origin in the individual soul. But a theology which is truly "experimental" will examine all these "deviating" experiences of the modern soul, and, wherever such experiences are really typical and not merely individual, will seek to trace in them a new creative revelation of the Christ as Redeemer.

And such a view is not nearly as "subjective" and merely psychological as it looks to the narrowly Pauline mind. It has its justification in a part of the eternal Gospel which this type of theology strangely reduces to a mere mild preliminary to Paulinism which may safely be ignored—the earthly life and teaching of Jesus. Modern Paulinism, not content with emphasizing the fact that that teaching was only preserved through a Church based upon the apostolic experience and that Jesus Himself was not always perfectly certain and clearly conscious of His nature and work, proceeds to the assumption that the apostolic mind saw clearly where His vision was dim, and could interpret Him better than

He had interpreted Himself in the days of His flesh. To call this superior apostolic insight "the posthumous work of Christ" is not to mend matters. We cannot, indeed, read the Gospel story truly except in the light of the Cross, and in the light not only of apostolic, but of all Christian experience; but we must *read* it in that light, not ignore it on account of that light. And if it is through such a renewed reading of the life and teaching of Jesus that the modern experience of a redeeming Fatherhood is possible, then the theology which sets it aside as merely occasional and casual is neither a theology of the Word nor of the soul; it comes short both of the objective standard and of the psychological facts. Certain it is that the new philosophic emphasis on religious experience and the new psychological particularity which studies individual biography (just as Bergsonism plunges into life as it flows past in all its multiplicity and confusion, instead of declining upon supposedly general principles, typical instances and normative lines of development) need to be taken more seriously into account by theologians to whom Paul is becoming a tyrannous and hieratic convention, as well as by "new" theologians who start with alien metaphysical conceptions.

It is frequently objected that such a method is altogether too "subjective." Neither faith nor theology can be founded on individual experience; we must have an objective authority

to carry our conviction. This is undoubtedly true, if by individual experience we mean subjective emotionalism detached from history and from the collective Christian consciousness; if we exclude the consciousness of the "otherness" of God from religious experience. But, defining that experience as including a non-self as well as a self, an objective as well as a subjective, a Transcendental as well as an Immanental, the objection surely loses its force. Moreover, not one of the theologians who stand for this principle of an "objective" authority has quite succeeded in giving a satisfactory definition of its nature, or in establishing its validity for us. Thus Dr. Forsyth, in his invaluable Yale lectures,[1] after taking great pains to make it clear that that authority is not to be sought for in the Bible, not even in the teaching of Christ, the impressiveness of His personality, or the authority of His beliefs, leaves us with the moral authority of Christ in the conscience as its redeemer, regenerator and new creator. But if the authority of Christ is thus not only objective but inward, how can it be known and proved except just in that conscience which it redeems, that experience which it creates?

The desire to preserve both the experiential and the narrowly historical and dogmatic points of view has given birth to a type of theological teaching which takes away with one hand what it gives with the other. An apparently

[1] *Positive Preaching and Modern Mind*, Lecture II.

remote, but really acutely relevant, instance of this is found in Dr. James Denney's *magnum opus* "Jesus and the Gospel," where he pleads for the abolition of credal formulæ in favour of a simple "experiential" expression of faith, "I believe in God through Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord and Saviour," and then proceeds to define that expression in a sense grounded upon the objective authority of the total testimony of the New Testament writers to the Person and work of Christ, and more especially upon Christ's testimony to Himself. But if the experiential point of view is really taken, it is obvious that quite apart from any critical objections to Dr. Denney's position regarding the genuineness of certain words of Jesus, we cannot admit the authoritative significance of the self-testimony of Jesus, however historically secured, for our faith. Only on an assumption directly opposed to Dr. Denney's conviction, *viz.*, the assumption that Jesus is not a present Saviour, but merely a historical and theological figure, could the modern mind ground a certain faith, or rather belief, upon His historically unimpeachable testimony. Granted a living, present Christ, present experience of His redeeming action must be its own witness, stand upon its own independent and inward certitude to which any historical testimony is only a corroborative adjunct. Again, admitting the validity of Dr. Denney's historical and Biblical data, the shortness and simplicity of his new

creed do not make it one whit less external and oppressive, for behind it and underneath it is a complicated and elaborate justification on the basis and authority of certain historical facts; and with such a weight of Christological dogma it makes very little difference whether the "creed" is a little longer or a little shorter: as a matter of fact, a detailed dogmatic confession of faith would, under the circumstances, be the "simpler" of the two.

But it must not be concluded that the theology of the future, starting from the method of psychological particularity, will be unhistorical in the sense of Schmiedel's assertion that even if he were forced to conclude that Jesus had never lived, His faith would remain unimpaired. On the contrary, a study of religious experience such as recent philosophical thought indicates for theology will go to intensify the conviction that the power which creates the Christian consciousness is none other than the power that entered the history of the race in Christ Jesus. Further, though we may admit that the individual's faith may be maintained apart from belief in the historic Christ, modern thought insists upon the solidarity of the race, and the collective Christian experience is certainly based upon the Christ of history, whatever may be true of individuals here and there. And if that is so, the individual consciousness which forms part of the communal cannot in the long run remain entirely unaffected

by the removal of that historical basis. All we contend for is that while God came to us in history, we who have gained a practical conviction of the autonomy and self-evidencing character of religious experience cannot subject it to a historical tribunal, or lay upon the details of the life and words of Jesus, however firmly attested, a weight they are not warranted to bear. The psychological movement in theology has suffered misinterpretation through being identified with the work of William James. Against his interpretation of Christian experience, valuable as it is, the objection of subjectivism may be urged. But a soundly " psychological theology," if that term may be used without risk of misunderstanding, insists upon the authority of the soul's present intuitions of truth and grace, not because the Christ of history is irrelevant to our experience of redemption, but because every soul that believeth is contemporaneous with Him.

Bearing the Ritschlian influence in mind, it would appear at first sight that theology has little to learn from that great ethicising movement which forms, perhaps, the most important element in modern thought. Theology, indeed, as has been shown already, insisted upon the primacy of the moral long before Pragmatism and Activism were heard of. Yet it has far more to learn even here than is supposed, and that in two directions. On the one hand, it has failed to carry the implications of its principle to their

legitimate consequences; on the other, the moralisation of theology, especially as found in Ritschlianism, has tended to an irrationalism far more pronounced than the slightly irrationalistic tendency of Eucken's Activism.

An ethicised theology true to its central principle cannot afford to approach the evolutionary type. If the call of Jesus be a call to repentance, if His appeal be not to the *pro* and *contra* of speculative reason, but to the power of moral choice, then clearly there must be two alternatives to choose between: there must be a cleavage in man's being necessitating a clean break with one of two courses. Much of our present-day teaching, while insisting upon the moral imperative of Jesus, makes it a mere echo of our own aspirations, ascribes to mankind in general the *anima naturaliter Christiana*, and thus produces an effect very like that of a certain popular evangelist, who told a story of a merry company of people suddenly rushing out of the house, and trampling one another down in panic-stricken confusion, but forgot to say that the house was on fire. It is here that Eucken's negative movement with its connotation of conversion comes as a preacher of repentance to an inconsequent theology. Over and over again he uses language which could be used from any Christian pulpit without the slightest modification, and it is significant to note how in recent times philosophy has restored to honour terms which a certain type of theology is somewhat

reluctant to use. Turn to Eucken and you find the struggle for a concrete spiritual experience represented as a struggle between world-powers engaged in a titanic conflict for the soul of man, as a dread choice between two clearly opposing principles, between the pettily human and selfish and the absolute spiritual life. Turn to a type of theology prevalent to-day, and you will find the struggle represented as the victory of the soul which has an overwhelming affinity with Christ, and is, indeed, His counterpart, over that "ape and tiger" which are the survivals of an earlier stage of evolution, and which must disappear in time. It is in Eucken, not in such theology, that we breathe a New Testament atmosphere, and divine the reality of the light that shineth in darkness, and of the darkness that comprehendeth it not. His philosophy in what may be called its fundamental aspect reflects the antagonism between love and sin which makes the story of the life of Jesus so exasperating to the candid pagan soul that has not been blunted by that prettified convention of it known as "the Galilean Gospel." If there is anything at all in our vaunted ethicising of theology, it is that Jesus came with an ethical demand which not only created a new type of goodness, but also initiated a new and unprecedentedly grim moral struggle; which evoked not only a new spiritual vision, but also revealed an implacable enmity and rage; which was not only satisfying, but also irritative. We may—

such is our power of manipulating thought—so mediate the Christ to the intellect that even His Cross is no longer a foolishness. But the stuff of our moral and spiritual nature is not so plastic, and it is only by sheer juggling that we can get rid of that "offence" which is the moral and spiritual counterpart of the metaphysical concept, doubt. Nay, our very attempts to get rid of it prove that the centuries have not weakened its provocative and collisive force.

To restore the great "Either-Or" to theology may be the most important effect of the present powerful impact of the new Idealism upon it. Much of our popular preaching and writing exhibits what is but another aspect of that appeal to the witness of the centuries, which, as we have seen, is both bad history and bad metaphysics, not to speak of bad theology. It tells us, in effect, to rejoice in the triumph of Christ's Person and teaching over the race. For a little while He was despised and rejected. His contemporaries misunderstood Him and meted out cruel injustice to Him, but soon the judgment of humanity recovered its balance. History has vindicated Him, and to-day He is Lord of the best of our race. But if we have any but the flattest Socinian conception of Christ, we must ask, Did He ever stand at the judgment bar of history? Does He —the despised and rejected Jesus—not follow the ages and accompany every generation, not to be judged by it, but to judge it? And if so,

what can be His verdict on a generation that dares to say, "We have vindicated Him." If that "offence" was not an accident, but the necessary consequence of love coming to a sinful world, of truth coming to a conventional, mediocre, insincere world; if it is the supreme demonstration that love and truth cannot come into this world without suffering, then is it not true also that the theology which eliminates the "offence" eliminates salvation? And once more, if the modern religious mind, encouraged by Eucken's interpretation of history and by Bergson's call to plunge into the living stream of reality, recognises that it is of the essence of faith to become contemporaneous with Jesus, then the "offence" must be present—especially at the cross-roads of the soul, which Eucken calls the great "Either-Or." It may be the impetus to rejection, it may be the occasion of faith; one might say that, except in the case of undeveloped souls, he who does not know what it is to be "offended," does not know what it is really to believe. And this "offence," be it noted in passing, is not to be narrowly defined in reference to the Cross. It follows the simple human life of Jesus, and is most poignant and tragic, not for the alien Pharisee, but for the would-be disciple. And while "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me," is becoming a faint and all but illegible blur over the entrance-gate to faith, philosophy is ever more boldly writing it up over its portals;

and it is surely significant that Eucken, whose undogmatic Christianity precludes the "offence" in our sense of the term, should see in the race so deep-seated an antagonism to good that conversion is the only term which adequately describes his "negative movement."

But there is yet another sense in which the ethicising of theology has remained incomplete, and here Eucken can help us only by implications which he himself does not admit, while Bergson supplies us with valuable principles, whose implications he has not yet developed. While the influence of Ritschl has made the insistence upon a historical manifestation of God's redeeming activity almost a superstition among us, we are still a little anxious and uncertain as to how such a revelation can be squared with science and metaphysics. As a matter of fact, we are still under the action of the Hegelian microbe, and inclined to be almost abjectly apologetic in our attempts to commend such a historical crisis as that of the Cross to the modern mind which sees the act of God everywhere. We have seen already how Bergson's doctrine of creative evolution does away at one sweep with this type of attempts to reconcile the historical Incarnation with the theory of evolution. Life is absolutely original and incalculable. In some sciences, *i.e.*, in astronomy or chemistry, discoveries can be anticipated and afterwards brought under general laws; in biology the intelligence is baffled.

Life solves its own problems in its own way. And if even the chlorophyl action of plants shows amid much fixity some freedom, some element of the incalculable, how much more will the work of the Saviour, where life at its deepest and at its supreme potentiality is confronted with its crucial problem, present aspects which only the intuition of love and the penetration of a stricken conscience can apprehend.

Again, we have seen how Eucken's Activism implies the very thing he rejects as dogma—a supreme redeeming act of God in history—and how his conception of the past as living involves the timeless power of every truly moral act. And if our defective insight can transform the past and determine the future, and one act of ours can change the face of our world for all time, they must surely be grounded upon the pardoning insight and the crucial action of God—the insight expressing itself in the act. Here again, Bergson's doctrine of concrete time comes to our aid. To quote the fine words of Baron von Hügel, " Since all characteristically human values and ideals, indeed the very notion of worth, are developed, captured and maintained, not in time but in duration, history is busy with realities, which, at bottom, even here and now, are not in time at all." It will be seen at once how such a view rehabilitates the doctrine of the Eternal Priesthood of Christ, which an over-hasty modernism has relegated to the scrap-heap of dogmatic super-

stition. For what do this and cognate doctrines imply if linked up with recent philosophical thought? First, that God is so intimate with us that in His ethical integrity lies our spiritual life, that if He relaxed for one moment in His steady upholding of every morally precious thing, ideals would perish out of the heart of man, and the race would go down to darkness. It also implies that human history has a value for God, and that He accompanies it with a sympathy which is no mere view *sub specie æternitatis*, but a real participation, an attitude which is modified from moment to moment by the actual character of that history. It follows that for a race that has violated the moral order, there can be no refuge from the sense of guilt in the indulgent love of God, not only because God's love is incorruptibly ethical, but also because He loves the persons whom we have injured with a love so passionate and substitutionary that to touch them is to touch the apple of His eye. Only in one way can an equation with the moral order be brought about—by a supreme personal act of God, the maintaining of the world's moral aim within the race by One who makes God's atoning purpose His own, and makes it available for the race as a moral possession wrought out in history. And when we look at the life and death of Jesus, not with the purblindness of our metaphysical and theological prepossessions, but vitally and personally; when we feel the throb of His great

impulse of Saviourhood, and realise His absolute abandonment to that impulse, and so to the Holy Will whose expression it was, can we doubt that in Him something has come to the race, something has been actualised within it, which amounts to a creation of a new world? Again, if we view Jesus as the central heart and conscience of the race and as the soul's Ideal and Higher Self; if we see Him in the individual experience as within our consciousness and yet not completely embraced by it, do we not see Him there too as the One who equates us morally with God, the great High Priest who has made an eternal sacrifice to the Infinite Right and the Eternal Reason of the Ideal we ought to be? And so what was done once for all in time becomes a present eternal fact for all time, and we get back to the sublime conception of an Eternal Priesthood of Christ.

Coming now to the irrationalism of our moralised theology, recent philosophical thought offers us at least the rudimentary material for a doctrine of the spiritual reason. Even Eucken's irrationalism is only apparent, a more close working out of his theory of knowledge being all that is needed to make it disappear, and his insistence upon a speculative basis for religion might well be considered by belated Ritschlians of the primitive type. There can be no doubt that the irrationalism of pragmatic theology was necessitated by the course of Church history, and has exercised a wholesome corrective function. The roots of this

tendency lie in the gigantic conflict with Gnosticism at the dawn of Church history, when a true instinct prompted the theologians to rescue Christian thought from ultimate secularisation by setting the experience of salvation high in a place where reason could never come. But we no longer believe that personality functions in detachments, and that when the soul enters the Holy of Holies reason must wait in the outer court. We believe rather that the whole inner life of man is involved in every psychosis. "Whoever," says Dorner, "reveres Christianity as accordant with the highest reason must also assume a progressive unfolding and strengthening of reason through the power of Christianity, and that no term can be fixed for reason in this advance." This means that the experience of redemption is ultimately not only an ethical conversion, but a spiritual gnosis.

And further still, we may deduce from Bergson's doctrine of intuition the right of what might be called an ideal dogmatic. We have seen that Bergson by no means undervalues the conceptualising faculty. By its means reality is made portable and available. Applying this to dogmatic theology as ordinarily understood, it conveys the warning that our religious experiences and intuitions will tend to remain sterile and ineffective, if not to grow blurred and finally to disappear, unless the dogmatising instinct be allowed its right, unless they are in some way formulated and

conceptualised. Illustrations of this may be found in the present-day vagueness and casualness of religious experience, traceable to the decay of catechetical and dogmatic instruction. And if Bergsonism implies a " reason " above discursive thinking ; if his intuition, at least in one aspect of it, may be understood as redeemed reason, then there arises a demand for an ideal dogmatic which shall transcend that of the discursive reason. And this means, *inter alia*, that the apparent dualism between Christ and God as it is seen in Ritschlianism will be dissolved. Arising from the inadequacy of the logical understanding, it represents no real distinction. It is only one more instance of that originality and unexpectedness of life which are the despair of discursive thought. To faith Jesus and God are one. But as we have seen, faith is only another name for that Bergsonian plunge into the life-flux which alone brings us into touch with ultimate reality ; and if the discursive understanding introduces a dualism between the two, it is just because thought must ever lag behind life. And seeing that the intuitional plunge implies the redemption of reason, the birth of a new understanding, that reason will have its ideal dogmatic in which all such oppositions shall be transcended. One is aware that to a narrowly moralistic theology which makes penitence the complete and only expression of the soul's relation to God, and forgiveness with its consequent moral renewal the sole element in that

soul's experience, this will seem a departure from moral realism. But while the primacy of the moral remains a living truth, the segregation of the moral from other aspects of the personality is no longer possible, and a theology which lacks the element of gnosis answers neither to the deeps in the soul of man nor to the revelation of the Logos.

These indications—mere hints of a prophecy which may be modified at the next bend of the road by the emergence of wider vistas to human thought—serve to show that theology cannot afford to keep aloof from a philosophical world in which there are many voices and none without signification. If one *desideratum* may be emphasised above many others, it is that theology should put off a certain proud "objectivity," and be content to start along the lines of a psychological investigation to which the individual and particular, the confusing biography of the vaguely striving soul, the religious experience of the humble and inarticulate, the many strange mystical cults which we think we can ignore, are sacred objects of inquiry. It is such particularities which compose that religious life-flux into which the theologian must plunge if he would not be left on the dead shore with the imaginary time-stick of a Pauline paradigm and the dogmatic tortoise of a view based upon a generalisation. And such a theology, applying its own experimental principle to a new philosophy,

will not be enthralled by it, but will have an even completer liberty of thought towards it than towards the Christian documents and crystallisations of dogma. On the other hand, it will not seek in turn to bend philosophy to its own uses. It will not only be free from its domination; it will also let it go its own way, not seeking to manipulate it in the interests of religion. There is no apologetic more humiliating than the frantic attempt to make philosophy speak the language of Canaan. To give it the same independence as theology claims for itself, to use it freely and join it daringly in its attempts at an adequate interpretation of the world, but to base its own interpretation upon its own experience, is that "better part" which a truly free and "liberal" theology will have to take in the days to come.

And the moralising movement in philosophy will surely give such a theology and the preaching it produces a chance by preparing the public mind for it. To-day the light is only on the hills; to-morrow it will flood the valleys, and a way will be opened as never before to a really strong and deep religious suggestion. Men will realise that if the ultimate reality does not yield its secret to intellectual searching, it must be because that reality is personal—a Super-person, if one likes so to call it—and can only be known through personal relations. And from that position to the conception of a personality within the race, who,

in perfect fellowship and correspondence with this personal Reality, can equate the race with it through a supreme moral act, a life-task wrought out in history, is not so very large a step.

There remains one thing to be added. Both theology and philosophy build largely on each other's foundations, and borrow material from many quarters. Thus Eucken's spiritual life could never have been conceived apart from the Christian doctrine of Redemption, which underlies it most surely, even where it is construed in the least Christian sense. Thus, too, the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation would have been lost but for finding a congenial soil in the philosophical speculations of the fourth century. But speaking ultimately, it remains true that theology is autonomous, and will remain autonomous so long as she builds upon the foundations of the revelation of God as experienced in redemption. And so, while using all the material that science and philosophy can supply to her in ever growing quantity, she may, without undue arrogance, look upon the new spiritualisation of science and philosophy as hers, in the sense of being the unconscious product of the long-continued presence in the world of that experience of redemption of which theology is the exponent and expression. She can, therefore, say to a new philosophy of the spiritual life which claims to attain her end without accepting her dogmatic conditions, to a new spiritual immediacy which claims to be able

to see God clearly without the mediatorship of the Son of God :—

"Once in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed ;
Up there comes a flower ;
The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
Through my golden bower ;
And, muttering discontent,
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall,
It wore a crown of light ;
But thieves from over the wall
Stole the seed by night.

Sowed it far and wide,
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried,
'Splendid is the flower !'

Read my little fable—
He that runs may read—
Most can raise the flower now,
For all have got the seed."

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